

6

2839

The Crescent *versus* The Cross.

RMIC LIBRARY	
Acc. No. 2839	
Class No.	250 HAL
Date	
St. Card	
Class.	✓
Cat.	✓
Bk. Card	✓
Checked	Am

The Crescent VERSUS The Cross

BY

HALIL HÁLID

*Licentiate of the Institute of Law (Constantinople):
Honorary M.A. (Cantab.)*



ALL RIGHTS OF TRANSLATION RESERVED.

LONDON

PUBLISHED BY LUZAC & CO., GREAT RUSSELL ST.,

1907

OTHER WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

The Diary of a Turk. (Translated into Hindustani and published in Calcutta).

A Study in English Turcophobia. Published by the Islamic Society, London. (Translated into Arabic and Hindustani and published in Cairo and Culcutta).

Geza-ir Khatirati. (Impressions of Algeria). Published in Cairo.

A Catalogue of the Printed Muslim Books in the Cambridge University Library. (Unpublished).

In Preparation. Considerations on the History of the Turco-English Relations.

Some Press Opinions on the "DIARY OF A TURK."

The Times, April 24, 1903 : "It is a book which will be read with great pleasure by all who wish to see something of the East from within."

The Daily Telegraph, April 11, 1903 : "One of the most interesting books on Turkey ever published in this country—exceedingly life-like in every detail."

The Daily Chronicle, April 7, 1903 : "Here we have a genuine account of Turkish customs, education and politics."

The Daily News, April 10, 1903 : "Mr. Halid's book may contribute to a better understanding of the Eastern situation."

The Athenaeum, June 27, 1903 : "Far more instructive than books on Turkey usually are. There is a surprising amount of information in this unpretentious volume which we can strongly recommend."

Academy and Literature, April 25, 1903 : "A very interesting book."

Vanity Fair, April 9, 1903 : "Mr. Halid's book is of the utmost interest in the face of the present situation in the Near East."

Saturday Review, May 23, 1903 : "The writer's intimate knowledge of Constantinople enables him to give an idea of Turkish society and government which the ordinary Englishman in Turkey can hardly acquire."

Truth, July 23, 1903 : "The 'Diary of a Turk' will upset many current notions. Unquestionably the most interesting passage in the book to a commercial community is Mr. Halid's suggestion of the employment in the East of women as commercial travellers."

The Westminster Gazette, April 15, 1903 : "Apart from the writer's sound common-sense and clear view of the political situation, his book is extremely interesting."

The St. James's Gazette, April 4, 1903 : "An honest book, written by one in a position to give both fact and opinion, this "Diary" deserves to be widely read and carefully studied."

The Pall Mall Gazette, May 5, 1903 : "A readable, clever and informing book. We would strongly advise our readers to study this book."

The Queen, August 15, 1903 : ". . . . Its very instructive chapters deserve notice."

The Lady, July 23, 1903 : A good many prejudices will vanish from the minds of those who read this book."

The Ladies' Field, April 25, 1903 : "An informing book written with force and terseness. The chapters on the Harem are invaluable."

Press Opinions on

"A STUDY IN ENGLISH TURCOPHOBIA."

Morning Post : "The writer is rather better informed about England than the atrocity-mongers about Turkey. He attacks the British agitators on grounds of policy, good-sense, good-feeling, humanity and patriotism with a directness and wit which they will certainly dislike. At moments his irony is like Voltaire's."

The British Realm, February, 1904 : "This pamphlet is remarkable for the force of its logic and the restraint of its expression. . . . In deft, deadly, but always courteous sarcasm, this pamphlet is a classic."

PREFACE.

AN English friend who went through the pages of my manuscript told me that it would be prudent not to attach my name to this book, because it contained an unusually outspoken criticism of some aspects of Christian civilization. I have no doubt that this suggestion was given me with kindly intentions. But, to my mind, this sort of what may be called hidden attack is nothing less than treachery. My object in writing these pages is, in the first place, to defend the cause of the Islamic East, and, in the second, to point out some Muslim views on Western civilization. If I am fortunate enough to have defended the Eastern cause with any effect, however small the result of my efforts in this direction may be, I shall consider it a great moral satisfaction which will fully compensate for any possible injury to my position or interests on account of my candid criticism.

Nevertheless I cannot conceive how, in this fair land of freedom, a man can be harmed merely for frankly expressing his views in defence of a cause which he is honestly convinced to be a just one. I do not believe the unwritten law of English freedom prescribes that the Englishman should have free indulgence in criticising the ways of people of

PREFACE.

other countries, at the same time treating with intolerance what these other people say in self-defence. I am a Turk by race, and a Mussulman by faith, and everyone has some idea how the feelings of Mussulmans in general are hurt and with what brutal want of discrimination the honour of the Ottoman people in particular is assailed by many persons in this country. The mode of my criticism differs distinctly from that adopted by our antagonists, whose methods of campaign are almost always characterised by calumny and coarse invective. Such things will not be found in these pages ; I criticise methods and institutions, but I slander nobody.

I should not be seriously perturbed by the unfavourable verdict of any critic. One can learn much from a good criticism, and personally I should highly esteem any criticism which was made with courtesy, no matter how adverse it might be ; whereas the abusive remarks and personalities not rarely resorted to in the name of literary criticism would only convince an Oriental student like myself of the lack of good manners in the case of such critics, notwithstanding their claim to be considered "civilized."

I might have expressed all the Eastern views set forth in this work by assuming a diplomatic air of impartiality, such as is assumed by some Western scholars of hostile views who deal with matters relating to the Islamic East. But I am a believer in the old-fashioned virtue of candour. I have

PREFACE

perhaps too frequently given vent to my feelings in a strain of irony. But is not this quite natural in a man who observes so cruel an irony in all the tomfooleries practised in the East in the name of European civilization ?

The Western reader is perhaps not aware that an increasing amount of literature has of late been produced in the principal Eastern languages on the methods of Christian Europe in dealing with the peoples of the Orient. The matter will not rest there : the time is not far distant when an increasing number of Orientals will come forward to carry on this pacific campaign in the languages of their antagonists. The Western public may then be able to see that in every controversy regarding Oriental matters there is also an Oriental standpoint which has hitherto been neglected, hushed up or misrepresented by most writers of Christian Europe. Such a movement will, in my opinion, be the only means of establishing an understanding between the East and the West—an understanding which has, up till now, been erroneously considered impossible.

H. H.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER

- I. REMARKS ON CIVILIZATION
- II. THE CROSS AND THE CRESCENT
- III. THE CHRISTIAN PRIESTHOOD AND THE CRESCENT
- IV. THE CHRISTIAN EVANGELIZATION AND ISLAM
- V. RIVALRY IN PROSELYTISM
- VI. CAUSES OF SUCCESSFUL RIVALRY IN PROSELYTISM
- VII. ON THE POSITION OF MUSLIM WOMEN
- VIII. POLYGAMY AND DIVORCE
- IX. SLAVERY UNDER CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM
- X. ON THE PHILANTHROPY OF ABOLITIONISTS
- XI. THE SUBJECTION OF THE CRESCENT
- XII. THE PAN-ISLAMIC PERIL
- XIII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

THE CRESCENT
VERSUS
THE CROSS

CHAPTER I

REMARKS ON CIVILIZATION

Civilizing mission of the European Powers as a humanitarian work; the semi-barbarous East—Line drawn by the East between European civilization and material progress—Loose definition of civilization; according to the definition given of civilization Orientals come under the category of civilized mankind; judged by their deeds abroad some Occidentals can hardly be called civilized—Muslim East a convenient ground for “civilizing enterprises;” reason why it is regarded as barbarous; part played by official demagogery in this connection—Destruction of Muslim independence a victory for “civilization;” whether the ways of Christendom can be as easily introduced into the East as its rule is a dubious problem.

As has of late become a matter of common knowledge among Orientals, the territorial expansion of the Great Powers of Europe in

2 THE CRESCENT VERSUS THE CROSS

the Orient is styled the “civilizing mission.” There are a vast number of people in all parts of Europe who appear to be earnestly convinced that the introduction of the blessing of European civilization is really needed in the benighted East, and consequently they feel assured that the said “mission” of the Powers is a piece of humanitarian work. Only a few among these people strike us as being mindful of the record of history that in ages gone by various races of the East enjoyed a more civilized state of existence and possessed loftier humanitarian sentiments than the people of Western Europe, and that the East is, indeed, the cradle of civilization. *Ex Oriente lux.*

Again it is a prevalent notion among a large section of the European public that the familiar term “civilized world” can only be applied to the world of Christendom, and the Orient is considered either semi-civilized or totally barbarous.

To the Eastern mind, on the other hand, the West is a progressive world, and it is mainly on account of the great material progress which Europe has made during the last few centuries that she has gained ascendancy over the East. Scientific inventions

and industrial innovations have secured for her the magic power of arms, by which she has for some decades been imposing her will or her rule upon the nations of the Orient. There are certain fundamental causes, not unknown to the students of Oriental history, which have hindered or completely debarred the Eastern peoples from keeping pace with the nations of Occidental Europe in the same path of progress.

From the Oriental standpoint, moreover, the term "civilization" is loosely or defectively used by the people of Christendom, as material progress alone is not sufficient to secure to the Western nations the exclusive possession of civilized attributes; there must also be a moral side to civilization; and as far as this moral side is concerned the claim of Christendom to the monopoly of civilization is not altogether incontestable. It is maintained by some exponents of European civilization that material advancement has led the Christian nations to cultivate a higher instinct through which they have acquired as much superiority over non-Christian races in all moral virtues as they have in material progress. Doubtless this is a well devised argument, but the time of ignorant

4 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS

credulity in the East has almost passed when such a trumped up argument could have a more convincing effect on Orientals than the evidence of facts, and, as the Christian world does not exhibit sufficiently convincing proofs of its superiority other than material, the contention about the loftiness of its instinct is generally taken for the development of a sense of craft by which it outwits the non-Christian world. Civilization may enhance culture, but in reality this enhancement does not seem to be productive of ethical perfection.

It is customary for most writers of Western Europe to speak of European civilization in opposition to Oriental barbarism: in other words, in this age of European ascendancy, no people which does not belong to the community of Christendom seems to be regarded as civilized.

What is the true significance of this "civilization" is a question which often perplexes an Oriental student. If he refers to the standard works written by European writers themselves, he comes to the conclusion that several Oriental nations, which are conclusively regarded in Occidental Europe as uncivilized, come, according to these writings, under the

category of civilized mankind. While, on the other hand, in comparing the attributes of civilization laid down in those works with the deeds of Europeans, more especially in Asia and Africa, the Oriental student is led to think that some nations of the Christian world can hardly be called civilized, as the suppression of the independence of the Oriental nations and the destruction of their institutions and the spoliation of what is precious in the legacy of their past are deeds of barbarism which reveal to the Oriental the predominance of atavism in the European civilizer. He, moreover, discovers that the much talked-of word "civilization" is a vague term, and indeed, as is pointed out in *La Grande Encyclopédie*¹, it is difficult to give it a good definition.

Be this as it may, so long as the European domination over the Orient continues, so long will it be to the interests of Europe to represent the East as uncivilized, thereby justifying the necessity of her "mission" to introduce civilization among the Oriental peoples.

Those Oriental races which are most exposed to the rising tide of European ascendancy

1. *La Grande Encyclopédie*, vol. XI., p. 543.

6 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS

are followers of the Crescent. They inhabit those lands which immediately face Europe from the Atlantic up to the Caucasus, and thus afford the handiest field of enterprise for the pioneers of civilization. It is in vain to argue with the civilized zealots of Christendom that up to a few centuries ago the followers of the Crescent were superior, in culture as well as in material progress, to the peoples of the European continent, and that it was largely through the development of Muslim intellect in the Middle Ages that Europe, then almost semi-barbarous, began to learn some lessons in what we may call the civilized attributes and qualities of mankind. The less fanatical and the more intelligent among the Crusaders saw that their adversaries possessed many qualities worth adopting, and they imported from the East methods of progress which contributed to the development of European civilization.¹

Nowadays an European might regard all the followers of the Crescent as uncivilized, with as little discrimination and as strong conviction as a Chinaman would regard all foreigners as barbarians. We see nothing

1. See Guizot's *Histoire de la civilisation en Europe*, leçon VIII.

paradoxical in this notion when we bear in mind that this idea is fostered by the statesmen and politicians of Europe with that deliberate aim in view to which we have just alluded. The struggle for existence is becoming acuter every day in all the countries of Western Europe, and for statesmen and party politicians it is of the utmost importance that the ever-growing social and economic stress of their countries should be relieved, and that, as far as possible, discontent and elements of internal strife should be avoided. This object can best be obtained by securing in the Orient new outlets for the national products as well as by finding appointments for the ever-increasing army of office-seekers, and new lands for the surplus population. New markets, new fields of enterprise, and new happy-hunting grounds are not easy things to acquire, and not seldom they necessitate warlike measures, and war requires money. For the purpose of procuring the sinews of war statesmen must of course depend on the tax-paying public. Here a kind of official demagogery plays a great part. The feelings of patriotism of the multitude are systematically tickled by public speeches on the platforms and by eloquent articles in the partisan papers in which the question of

8 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS

national honour and the glory of the national flag are continually brought to the front. Such a serious matter as embarking on a new conquest requires solid justification, which can best be found by representing in the gloomiest light the state of affairs in the coveted lands of the Orient, and by attributing, at the same time, to the peoples of those lands the responsibility of the misrule, anarchy, and savage deeds which, if not really existent, can be created by means not unknown to observers of the course of European diplomacy in Eastern countries. Thus the introduction of a civilized form of government is justified.

Bearing these considerations in mind, we do not wonder that the greater bulk of the European public should classify the people of the Crescent among the species of uncultivated barbarians, and should welcome the destruction of the national independence of any Mussulman country as a victory for the cause of civilization. Most probably the magic power of the West will, for a long time to come, enable it to uphold its supremacy in the East.

The mastery of the West over the East is a problem of political magnitude, on which we will concisely set forth the Eastern view

later on. The “civilizing missions” of the Powers will certainly stimulate the efforts of the missionaries of Christendom to introduce into the East the habits, manners and religious forms of the West. Although stupendous efforts are constantly being made in this direction we have strong doubts whether these ways and religious forms could be introduced into the Orient as successfully as the political mastery of Europe has been imposed upon the various Eastern nations. As far as the people of the Crescent are concerned, attempts in this direction will certainly not be crowned with appreciable success, as the more thoughtful among them can see the seamy side of the ways and habits of civilized Europe, while Christianity, as practised in Europe, will not inspire them with genuine ardour to embrace it. The world of Islam has its views on Christianity and its much glorified civilization. In these pages we shall try to represent those views chiefly.

CHAPTER II.

THE CROSS AND THE CRESCENT.

Antagonism between the Cross and the Crescent has been originated in Christendom—Muslim view of Christ and of the Bible—How the text of the Koran has been guarded against falsification—Mussulmans venerate Christ—The explanation of “Father, Son and Holy Ghost” rejected as unintelligible—Mussulmans call Jesus the Spirit of God. Christian tale of the Crucifixion disbelieved by Mussulmans—Its representation in the fine arts regarded as unaesthetic—Sympathy expressed in the Koran with Christians—Jerusalem made by Mussulmans the point for turning the face to in prayer—Holy Land defended against Crusaders for the purpose of protecting its sanctity ; Muslim soldiers now guard its sanctity against violation by Christian fanatics—Mussulmans prayed along with Christians in Church for eighty years—Inter-marriage with Christians favoured by Islam—Early Caliphs honoured Christian men of learning ; in those days no Christian country would tolerate the presence of learned Mussulmans ; one Christian sect would not even tolerate others—The employment of slow fire.

THE Crescent is a term which appears to designate Islam. The term must have been coined in Europe, as it is only in European languages that it is used in that sense. For the adherents of the creed

of Muhammed it is something like sacrilege to signify their faith by that term even in an allegorical sense. No piece of wood or metal or any other object containing the sign of the Crescent can be made a symbol of the faith. The Crescent is known to have been used by Romans and Byzantines, and it is from the latter that the Ottomans must have adopted it as their national ensign. The Ottoman sovereign is looked upon by most Muslims of the Orient as their nominal head ; but it does not follow that the ensign of his sovereignty should signify the world of Islam. Thus in theory the Crescent cannot be compared with the Cross of Christendom. Nevertheless, we shall, for the sake of convenience, use the term "Crescent" throughout these pages in its European sense.

As the Cross and the Crescent are often used in opposition to one another by those ecclesiastical and political writers in Europe who are interested in arousing the feeling of antagonism of those who follow the Cross against those who follow Islam, and this in the name of Christianity, the title of this chapter may at first sight impress the reader with the idea that we propose to make a counter attack

12 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS

upon Christianity. Essentially Islam is not antagonistic to Christianity, and the instances which we are going to cite are authentic evidences of the absence of such an antagonism. The religion of Islam prescribes to its adherents that they should venerate Christ, to whom the teaching of a true faith is believed to have been revealed. It, however, denies that the existing Bible contains the exact revelation, and consequently that book cannot be accepted by Muslims as the divine message. A study of the historical investigations made by the unbiased critics of Christendom in modern times will strengthen rather than weaken the old notion of Mussulmans as to the origin of the existing holy book of the Christians. It seems that no more convincing argument can be brought forward by Christian proselytisers than to maintain that the notions of the founder of Islam on the Bible were mistaken and that he was unable to conceive the true spirit of the Christian religion, having only known the crude form of Christianity practised in Arabia and Syria in his time. The modern critics of Mubammed do not clearly explain what form of Christianity in those early ages was better or more refined. Can they be sure that the conventional Christianity

observed in modern times, which presents no miraculous attraction to Muhammed's followers, would have impressed the Prophet more favourably? Mussulmans believe that, like Christ, Muhammed was an inspired Prophet, who however guarded the exact contents of the Koran against apocryphal alterations or revisions after his time by declaring that it was a most meritorious act to commit the text of the Koran to memory; and accordingly from the time of his death up to the present day hundreds of thousands of his followers in Asia and Africa have been learning by heart the same version of the Koran, in its entirety and in the pure and original Arabic. The wisdom of this injunction becomes evident when we consider how, in the course of the world's events, a fiction is sometimes converted into a positive truth and a truth perverted into fiction, even in a short lapse of time. A book on religion which came into existence by piecemeal compilation a few decades, not to say a few hundred years, after the death of the founder of that religion, cannot rightly represent the doctrine of its founder; it certainly should not be offered to the world as the gospel of a true religion.

14 THE CRESCENT VERSUS THE CROSS

While not believing in the divine origin of the existing versions of the Bible the Islamic world has implicit faith in the divine birth of Jesus Christ. "The Muslims," says Luther, "pay the most honourable testimony to Jesus Christ."¹ As a matter of fact some Christian writers (moved by a stronger sense of truthfulness than the rest) do not ignore this "honourable testimony," but they object that Mussulmans do not look upon the Saviour in the same light as they do. This is quite true. "Father, Son and Holy Ghost," for example, is an article of faith which has always remained utterly inconceivable to the Muslim mind, and it will become more so as the thought of the Eastern world regarding religion becomes more rationalistic. The explanations of the learned missionaries of Christendom on such an article of creed will carry no weighty conviction; and no arguments, however skilfully they may be devised by the fine ingenuity of cultured Evangelists of the West, will ever be of any avail in explaining the significance of these three things to the people of the Mussulman East. This reminds us of the following story of a conversion. "How many Gods are

1. Luther's *Table Talk*, p. 359. London, 1848.

there?" was a question which was once put to a Turkish prisoner of war who was brought by a Russian general to Paris, where he was prevailed upon by some Evangelists to embrace Christianity. "None at all," was the answer of the baptized Turk. "What!" exclaimed the astonished Christians, "up to within a few days ago you have, as a Mussulman, declared that there was but one God!" "Exactly," said the Turk, "but your proselytisers made me eat it." It appears from his last reply that neither Baptism nor the Lord's Supper could have any effect in purging the devil out of that "anti-human specimen of humanity."¹ The story may sound frivolous, but it explains why a reasoning Mussulman does not really accept the faith of the Christian Church, though he pays the most reverent testimony to Christ.

The Mussulmans, who believe that their own Prophet was a mortal who came into the world and died like the rest of mankind, call Jesus the "Spirit of God." In the ages when an offence against religion was regarded as a

1. "Anti-human specimen of humanity" is one of those polite expressions by which the late Mr. Gladstone, that great Christian, used to characterise the Mussulmans of Turkey after he had espoused the Russian cause in the Eastern Question. See his "Bulgarian Horrors," p. 13.

16 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS

serious crime the Mussulmans used to punish any one who reflected upon the doctrine of His Divine Creation. An English author¹ relates that in days gone by a Christian who had turned Muslim began to blaspheme Christ, imagining that this would please his new co-religionists. Thereupon his Muslim hearers brought him before the magistrate, who condemned him to death. A similar case occurred in Turkey some four hundred years ago, and is recorded in the annals of the semi-religious courts of that country. The case is thus recorded : a Jew insulted a Christian by openly making coarse remarks about the Divine birth of Christ. Some Mussulmans who heard the Jew's offensive remarks brought him before the court, and upon their evidence the offender was condemned to death,² and this of course for the grave nature of his offence and not for his disbelief.

Islam also holds different views on the death of Christ. Whether historically correct or not it does not admit the possibility of the crucifixion of Christ. It advances the theory

1. E. Bosworth-Smith, "Muhammed and Muhammedanism," p. 269.

2. This judgment can be found in an Oriental book called "Fatava-i-Ali Effendi," British Museum Library. Pressmark : 758, i, II.

that some one else must have been crucified by mistake in His place, as it cannot reconcile His lofty position with the alleged form of His death, a form which, to the Muslim mind, only befits criminals. To the Muslim mind it is not only sacrilegious but also illogical at once to deify Him and make Him suffer such a death. The Christian explanation that "Christ suffered that painful death for our sins" fails to satisfy the critics of the non-Christian world. It is doubtless convenient for many Christians to regard the passage of their Scriptures concerning the crucifixion as an insurance policy and to conduct themselves in a manner which is hardly pious, feeling sure that they are safe against hell fire because Christ suffered for their sins. Mussulman critics say "what fanciful notions these Christians entertain on this subject! They not only state that the One, whom they are to worship, died such a death, but also make a mournful picture out of their notion of crucifixion, representing it by the fine arts—a picture which is neither realistic nor aesthetic."

We now come to cite other instances to show that originally Islam was not antagonistic

towards the faith of Christ; indeed it was sympathetic towards those who professed that faith. The following passage of the Koran explains the true feelings of Muhammed towards the Christians; "Thou wilt find those to be nearest in affection who say, 'We are Christians.'"¹ It was just about the beginning of the spread of Islam, when Muhammed was struggling with the pagan Arabs of Mecca, that there came the tidings of a crushing victory of the Persians over the Byzantine Christians. The heathens of Mecca (who considered the Persians akin to themselves in the matter of religion, and the Mussulmans, as monotheists, akin to the Christians) rejoiced over this victory, and boastfully declared to the followers of Muhammed that they would soon meet the fate of *their brethren*, the Christians. These tidings caused much concern to the Prophet and his companions.² They were, however, consoled soon afterwards by the promulgation of a message from the Koran which says "the Byzantine Christians are overcome . . . but they shall overcome in a few years."³ The prophetic foresight of Muhammed was justified, as it was about the year 625

1. Koran, v. 85.

2. Ahmed Jevdet, *Kissass-i-Enbia*, p. 361. Brit. Mus. Lib.

3. Koran XXX. 2.

that the Persians were defeated and were driven over the borders of the Byzantine empire.

Bearing in mind the above testimonies of the Koran and of history, the fanatical disdain of Christianity of which Islam is accused, if existing to-day, cannot but have been originated by Christians themselves. In the existing antagonism the influence of the Christian priesthood appears to have been the chief factor.

There are other facts which illustrate the spirit of conciliation entertained in the world of Islam towards Christianity. We may here as an example show how earnestly the Holy Land of the Christians is venerated by Muslims. After the appearance of Islam Jerusalem was for many years made "the point towards which the prayers of the believers should be directed."¹ Muhammed could very well dispose of this devotional custom, because it is clearly pointed out in the Koran that "piety does not consist in turning your faces towards the East or towards the West."² The Jews, who had

1. *Bible and Islam*, H. P. Smith, D.D., p. 39. This fact is also mentioned in the Encyclopaedia Britannica. See the article "Muhammedanism."

2. Koran, 2, 172.

20 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS.

probably vital reasons for obstructing the bridging over of the gulf between Christianity and Islam, brought their influence into the scale, and for the followers of Muhammed Jerusalem has ultimately ceased to be a point to be turned towards at devotional moments.'

But the Holy Land has nevertheless remained a place of veneration for them, and it was on account of this pious motive rather than from political considerations that in subsequent ages the people of the Crescent defended the Holy Land so ardently against the invasion of the Crusaders. By their desperate struggle the Muslims wished to prevent the introduction of the vices of the West into Jerusalem by those bloodthirsty Crusaders whom they regarded as unworthy followers of the peace-loving Christ. We make bold to contend that even nowadays the respect shown for Jerusalem by Muslims is more sincere than that which is exhibited by the followers of the Cross. The keys of the Holy Sepulchre are entrusted to Mussulman guardians, because the different sects of professed Christians entertain a deeply rooted suspicion of each other's unholy designs for political supremacy. Is it not a fact that one

of the great wars of the nineteenth century, the Crimean war, partially originated in the dispute between some Christian Powers for gaining predominant influence in the Holy Land ? Only as recently as a few years ago several Mussulman soldiers were mortally wounded and their officer lost his eyesight in preventing the fighting evangelists of different Christian nationalities from violating the sanctity of the Holy Place by their profane quarrel.

There were other Christian places of worship which were very highly respected by the followers of the Arabian Prophet, such, for instance, as the Cathedral of St. John at Damascus. After the conquest of that city Mussulmans prayed for eighty years in that Church which, with the consent of Christians, they shared with them.ⁱ They refrained from appropriating it for their exclusive use because such a step would have been contrary to the spirit of the capitulation which they had granted to the Christians. Nevertheless after a while they abandoned the idea of sharing the Cathedral, being no longer able to suffer the wild chanting of the Christians during prayer-times. Such a mode of musical service, as we

2839

i. T. W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, p. 50.

22 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS.

may call it, must have as disturbing an effect upon the quiet but solemn character of worship of Mussulmans as the violent tolling of Church bells has upon the mind of some Mussulmans who live in great Christian countries.

In Islam inter-marriage with Christians has always been favoured with the same idea of bringing about a state of conciliation between the adherents of the two creeds, and Christian women who were to marry Mussulmans have not been urged to change their religion. A Muslim general, whose mother was a Christian, had a Church built for her.¹ A tradition of Muhammed says, "If your Christian mother is infirm and cannot walk, carry her on your back to her Church," that is, of course, if you cannot afford to drive her.

Christian men of culture have always found high favour in the courts of the Caliphs. Some European writers, who will not allow any people outside the pale of Christendom the credit for broad-minded deeds of humanity, have thought it expedient to interpret this favour as due to superiority of talent, which

1. For this and other Churches built by Mussulman dignitaries refer to T. W. Arnold's *Preaching of Islam*, p. 59.

they perhaps suppose to be one of the divine attributes of Christian men alone. The inherent prejudices of these writers must blind them to the fact that Mussulmans, as human beings, did not lack the same talent, and that Islam respects intellect irrespective of the religion of the persons who possess it, and it is for this reason that many learned Jews have also enjoyed an honourable position and rank in the Muslim states. "Learning is the lost property of the faithful; they must seek it wherever they see it," is one of the best known sayings of the Prophet. Those who have read the history of the Abasside Caliphate will know that, in the reign of El-Ma-moun, Christian and Jewish and other theologians and men of learning used to be invited to the court to have an open and free controversy with Mussulmans on important metaphysical subjects, especially on the comparative ethics of their respective systems. They were "treated not only with the highest respect but also entrusted with some of the most important offices of state.... It mattered not in what country a man was born, or what were his religious opinions."¹

^{1.} J. W. Draper, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*, chapter IV.

As far as we can learn from history, in those days there was not a single country in Christendom which could tolerate the presence of Muslim men of learning for a similar purpose. Centuries after the inauguration of such tolerance and freedom of conscience in Islam, one Christian sect could not even tolerate another, and persecuted its opponents as soon as it had the upper hand. Eminent men of learning who belonged to one denomination of Christianity have been burned at the stake by those who adhered to the other denomination, and this was done with a religious ardour which might excite the envy of those savage tribes who make human sacrifices to their gods.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHRISTIAN PRIESTHOOD AND THE CRESCENT

The hostility of the Christian priesthood to Islam is deadly—No priesthood exists in Islam ; Muhammed looked on the priesthood as an outgrowth of sorcery—Outrages caused by Crusades and Inquisition due to the influence of priestcraft—Methods of priesthood to secure allegiance from the Christian faithful ; evangelization identified with promotion of trade abroad ; legacies to evangelizing societies are always said to be for the sake of religion—Flag of conquest follows missionary Cross—Convention-alism in religious ceremonies enables the priesthood to exercise their ancient authority ; Christians still require the services of their priesthood from cradle to grave—Great rôle of priesthood in Christian marriages—Clerical influence in connection with Eastern question ; Servants of the peace-loving Christ as fire-eaters ; Sermons preached to incite the Christian faithful against Islam.

In the last chapter we have shown that the actual relations between the Cross and the Crescent are characterised by anything but friendliness, and we have pointed out that the existing antagonism has chiefly originated in

Christendom. A scholarly advocate of the spread of the Christian ideal in the East says “Muhammedanism is perhaps the only formidable antagonist of Christianity. From any variety of heathen religion Christianity has nothing to fear. But in Islam we have an active and powerful enemy.”¹ We are, for our part, firmly of opinion that, among the various elements which have stimulated that antagonism, the priesthood of Christendom is that which Islam has the most serious reason to fear. Therefore we shall in the following pages deal with the priestly adversaries of the Crescent.

By the term “priesthood” is meant here the spiritual hierarchy of Christendom, irrespective of the sects into which that hierarchy is divided. A proud Protestant may not approve of applying the term “priest” to the dignitaries of his Church, and he may only designate the ecclesiastics of some other denomination by that term. It may be that he calls them “priests” with the feeling of scorn with which brother Christians sometimes treat one another. Although unconnected with any of the Christian denominations we can under no circumstances allow ourselves to be carried away by any

1. Sir William Muir, *The Muhammedan Controversy*, p. 2.

THE PRIESTHOOD AND THE CRESCENT. 27

feelings of contempt towards ecclesiastics of any sect. Moreover our object here is to deal with the antagonism of the whole institution of sacerdotalism against Islam, and not to scornfully criticise individual priests. Personally many of the Christian priests are as good gentlemen as can be found among any worthy class of humanity. The Christian priesthood is looked upon by the people of the Crescent as the most irreconcilable foe to Islam, because it has always brought and still continues to bring upon Islam the opprobrium of the world, thereby imperilling its most vital rights and even the foundations of its sacred institutions.

It is maintained that there is no religion without a priesthood. This is not an unquestionable truism, for while Christianity has a "Holy Priesthood" the religion of Islam has not such an institution, as its founder distinctly ordained that there should be no priesthood in his religion. Here are his words on this prohibition : *La rouhbani-ateh fil-Islam.* For some reason or other Muhammed did not see any necessity for the intrusion of a third party between the Almighty Creator and us, His humble creatures. In Christendom, however, the intercession of a

28 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS.

middle-man in the person of the priest is required to obtain the Divine favour, of which the human being seems to be always in quest, as well as the Divine forgiveness for the misdeeds which mankind are so apt to perpetrate. As regards the necessity for obtaining the assistance of the priest in discharging devotional duties, this necessity is not thought in Islam to be of an indispensable nature. Any man of some religious education can conduct a prayer and perform a rite, neither the one nor the other requiring pompous formalities. It is true that there is a turbaned class who are entrusted with arranging or conducting services of devotion, but they have neither a privileged position nor a sacerdotal institution. Moreover, they can receive no Holy Orders from any venerated quarter, and their profession can therefore in no way be compared with the Holy Priesthood of Christendom.

There is another objection which prompted the founder of Islam to dispense with the need of an organised priesthood; he thought that sacerdotalism was purely and simply an out-growth of sorcery. Supposing that the priesthood did not practise the works of witchcraft, as it does among some heathen races of mankind, it might nevertheless exercise a magical influence

over the credulous masses, and such an influence would produce more harm than good to the particular community to which the priesthood belonged and to humanity in general. We are not in a position nor have we any right to examine how much good sacerdotalism has rendered to Christians, but, as far as the relations between them and the people of other creeds, such as Jews and Mussulmans, are concerned, the harm done by it is simply appalling ; the pages of history are full of the evil results of its intolerant influence. An enlightened posterity will always read with a feeling of abhorrence the cruel records of the Inquisition and Crusades which were instigated, promoted, and, we may say, actively supported by the priesthood. Christian sacerdotalism may not nowadays be able to instigate Christian nations to acts of such magnitude as those to which we have just referred, but the enormous power it has for centuries been enjoying does not appear to be diminishing in proportionate rapidity to the development of intellectual and rationalistic thought among the Christian peoples. Moreover, owing to the marvellous elasticity of its methods the priesthood will always be able to revive and nurse the mediæval prejudices of the majority of Christians, and

it will always do this in a fashion which would be quite in accordance with the tendencies of the age. 2839

Let us examine in what manner the priesthood might obtain the support of the Christian public in exercising, as far as possible, its old predominant influence. We know that the priesthood are under an obligation to evangelise the whole world. For some reasons which are best known to themselves, the servants of the Church of Christ are much more piously eager to fulfil this special task than any other injunctions of the Scriptures. The spread of materialistic thought among the Faithful forms, however, a great hindrance to the realisation of this object, and consequently it is prudent that this holy task should be carried out in an up-to-date manner so that it may be more in keeping with the tendencies of this practical age. For example, it would be a sound and businesslike policy if the work of evangelisation in non-Christian lands could be identified with the expansion of trade. Let anyone who is curious to get some idea of this policy go to a special religious service held, let us say, in a Church in some great commercial centre. There he can hear some priestly

dignitary emphatically declare that commercial morality, like every other fine quality, is a Christian virtue, that the Lord is sure to crown with success all the enterprises of good Christians abroad, and that, wherever the Bible is carried, thither trade will follow; in other words, the Cross is the veritable pioneer of Christian commerce.*

The poet may complain of the conduct of those who endeavour to find the means of Christianizing the world after this fashion, and cry:

“Who never naming God except for gain,
So never took that useful name in vain;
Made High his cat’s-paw, and the Cross his tool,
And Christ the bait to trap his dupe and fool.”

This mode of evangelization has, however, the magic power of securing appreciation, and this appreciation strengthens the hands of the priesthood to uphold its ancient influence over the Christian public.

i. A diplomatist takes a somewhat similar view on this pioneering. This will be seen from the speech of the English Ambassador in Paris which was delivered before the British Chamber of Commerce in that city, and which was published in the London papers of 2nd December, 1902. The Ambassador said, “the genius of commercial enterprise has supported the footsteps of the missionary.”

"Sacerdotalism," said a great theologian, "had its origin in the sentiment that it was necessary; it must therefore take care not to be considered useless."¹ With what amount of success the priesthood shows its usefulness and secures the appreciation of the capitalist may be seen from reading reports on "wills and bequests" which from time to time appear in the columns of the newspapers. There we observe that, among the charitable persons who bequeath handsome sums of money to various evangelizing societies, rich old spinsters and opulent capitalists figure conspicuously. One can understand the unselfish nature of the charity of the former. It may be that the rich spinster had been unkindly treated by Fate during her lifetime; and so it is very likely that she finds great consolation in acting thus charitably, hoping that thereby her life's grief may be recompensed in the Kingdom of Heaven. With this object she leaves a portion of her wealth to the work of proselytizing, hoping that those millions of her fellow-creatures who live outside the pale of Christianity may be saved from the thraldom of superstition. It is, however, doubtful whether

1. A. Réville: "*Préliminaire de l'Histoire des Religions.*" ch. iv.

the same unselfish motive inspires the opulent man of business who bequeathes money to the charity in question. He has most probably had business relations with the non-Christian countries where missionaries work. What does he really hope for by supporting missionaries? Is it a good seat in Paradise? To a suspicious mind there is good reason for believing that by his benevolent gift to the work of evangelization he not only hopes to secure the Divine mercy for his immoderate greed in accumulating his riches and incidentally ruining some of his fellow-beings during his life-time, but also shows his gratitude to the pious pioneers of commerce who have rendered him appreciable service in the heathen countries where he had business interests.

In this age of scepticism the Divine functions of the priesthood do not meet with much credence from the masses. The clerical ingenuity must therefore devise popular methods of asserting to the public the utility of the functions of its profession, and this can very well be done by identifying its work of evangelization with the civilising missions of the

34 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS.

Christian states in the Orient. It is not seldom that we hear high ecclesiastical dignitaries declaring that the flag follows the Cross to regions of the globe which have hitherto remained closed to civilization. This declaration amounts to admitting that the flag, which is almost always accompanied by fire and sword, is sometimes piloted to non-Christian countries by the very gentlemen who are supposed to preach the Gospel of the peace-loving Christ. "Christian Europe," said Herbert Spencer, "throughout many centuries saw priests taking as active a part in war as do priests among some savages."¹

Many instances could be cited to show how greatly the services of the priest who carries the Cross abroad are appreciated by the conquering Powers of Christendom, and how largely that appreciation enables the priesthood to assert the importance of its function. But we shall only give here one or two instances which are highly characteristic. A deep-thinking German philosopher might write pages to explain the simple fact that human beings often carry their religious pretensions to a farcical point; yet when a German divine is

1. "Ecclesiastical Institutions," ch. x.

martyred while carrying the Cross into China, the German flag follows to vindicate the outrage, and the German government, grateful for the excuse afforded by the missionary, appropriates a suitable part of the Chinese territory. The irreligious French Republic may stamp out the influence of the priesthood in France, but it supports, with all its power, the French evangelists in the Mussulman East, because they facilitate the political aspirations of France in that part of the world.

The increase of conventionalism in all ranks of society is said to be an outcome of over-civilization, and indeed to an Eastern observer over-conventionalism in civilized communities of the West is more markedly evident in the matter of religion than in anything else. Ceremonies and formalities, mingled with a vain snobbishness, characterise the majority of pious rites. Hence another opportunity for the priesthood, which follows keenly the trend of all popular tendencies of the moment, to prove the usefulness of its functions and thus exert its old influence. "Ceremonies", said Helvetius, "have always secured to sacerdotalism the greatest authority on divers conventional

formalities observed by the public".¹ In pompous state ceremonies as well as in the births, marriages and deaths of individuals the part played by the priesthood in most parts of Christendom appears to a Mussulman quite amazing. He finds it difficult to reconcile the much boasted enlightenment and cultured views of an American or European with his need of the absurd and superstitious forms which perpetually subject him to the old bondage of the priesthood from the time of his birth to his death.

In the birth of individuals one can understand the vital necessity for the services of the midwife, her tender care being of supreme importance for the preservation of the human species. Yet a midwife is not considered to be so important a personage as the priest who administers the rites of Baptism. What is the good of baptism to humanity?

“One can't but think it somewhat droll
Pump-water thus should cleanse a soul.”

In the death of individuals the services of an undertaker or grave-digger are indispensable. Without their assistance the remains of our dear departed would be left unburied, and,

1. Helvetius, *De l'Homme*, p. 223.

however near and dear they may have been to us in their life time, we cannot suffer their decomposed bodies to vitiate the purity of our atmosphere. Two classes of men relieve humanity from such an appalling and ghastly danger. Yet in the matter of the burial of the dead, people have greater regard for the services rendered by the priest than for those of the undertaker or grave-digger. They find consolation in the words uttered by the priest at the grave-side, though it is doubtful whether these will be of use to the dead in finding the right way to Heaven, while, on the other hand, the presence of the undertaker and grave-digger is regarded with gloom and horror, feelings which are hardly a fitting return for their truly humanitarian services.

Matrimony is the most sensational event in life, and in nothing is the sacerdotal grip on a Christian man's actions tighter than in the ratification of his marriage. Matrimony affords the priesthood a very good opportunity for asserting the importance of its functions, and as the part played by the priest in tying the nuptial knot between Christian men and women is of great interest to a non-Christian student of Christian life, our observations on

the subject of marriage will necessarily be a little more detailed.

In civilized countries a marriage is supposed to be legal when it is concluded in accordance with the state regulations concerning matrimony ; that is to say, such a marriage does not necessarily require the blessing of the priest. This, however, appears to be a mere theory. In reality any marriage, however legally it may have been performed, is not looked upon as a right union by what are called "good people," unless it has been duly conducted by a representative of the Church. These "good people" harbour in their inner consciousness a mighty contempt for civil marriages, a contempt which is no doubt gently and circumspectly fostered by the ecclesiastical guardians of public morality. In the "bigoted" world of Islam, any intervention of a holy man is not thought imperative in matrimonial affairs. There, the people conclude a marriage in the presence of relations and friends, who bear witness to the union and upon whose testimony the *Kadi* or magistrate signs the Marriage certificate. After dinner on the evening of the marriage the officiator of a neighbouring mosque or, failing him, someone

of education, says a short prayer in the house where the wedding has been performed, and this prayer merely contains petitions for the welfare of the wedded couple. They do not go to Church, or rather to their own place of worship, and they do not sing "*O perfect love,*" yet marriages do not prove a perfect failure out there more frequently than they do in Christendom; nor do they chant "*Lead us, Holy Father, lead us;*" why should they chant it when they see that sometimes divine Providence leaves even such ardent appeals unheeded and Satan takes his opportunity to lead the couple to the divorce court?

The religious obligations imposed in Christendom upon persons about to marry are so great that even a highly cultured man who may be thoroughly sceptical in the matter of religion and who may moreover entertain a strong dislike for all superstitious ceremonies, must, however unwillingly, assume a pious demeanour at his marriage in Church. How wretched must be the situation of a conscientious man when he stands, with his spouse at his side, before the altar to receive the divine sanction of the representative of the Church! No doubt the matrimonial show of the

Christians is impressive even to a Mussulman observer, but, candidly speaking, such a situation as we have just pictured is undeniably farcical.

So much on the mode by which sacerdotalism proves the necessity of its functions in matters of rites and ceremonies. We now come to another sphere in which it asserts its influence. This is the sphere of politics. The keen interest taken by the priesthood in the internal politics of a Christian country is outside our theme. We shall confine ourselves to the part they play in such foreign politics as may concern the Mussulman countries. The political affairs of these countries present the liveliest attraction for clerics, (especially those of Great Britain, from the lordly Bishop down to the humble curate). In this connection divergency of sectarian opinions is laid on one side, and the whole body of clericalism raises a united voice, appealing to Christian sentiment with a fervour worthy of the Christian ministers of the glorious days of the Crusaders. Ostensibly they raise their voice on behalf of the Christian brethren of the East, who are, of course, most outrageously persecuted simply because of their belief in

Christ, and whose complete deliverance can only be effected by substituting the blessed Cross for the hated Crescent. Several Lord Bishops and Canons patronise the indignation meetings of the agitation committees organised by humanitarian politicians. Speeches full of stirring eloquence, and sermons full of passionate appeal thunder forth from platforms and pulpits, and the valuable columns of several leading papers are packed with the long letters contributed by churchmen of all shades of opinion. In all these rousing appeals the great Christian Powers (who, by the way, are proudly declared by the preachers of the Gospel to be armed to the teeth) are frequently accused of apathy in not putting an end to the barbarous outrages committed on helpless Christians in the thraldom of Islam. Is not this then a proper occasion to draw attention to that clear and unequivocal statement of the Scriptures ? "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth : I came not to send peace but a sword."

In the special homilies given in the Churches the preachers begin to speak somewhat after this fashion : "The pulpit is not the

42 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS.

place to speak about politics. But....." and then they go on to explain that "the urgency of the moment necessitates it, and that all Christian men and women should take to heart the appalling state of affairs in the East." This sort of introduction in a sermon is exactly what the Arabs call "a phraseological bribe," by which a worthy orator can enlist on his side the sympathies of his audience, who are expected to swallow whatever argument he is about to advance. It is not difficult to see that the moment of effervescence of this crusading spirit sometimes coincides very awkwardly with certain territorial re-arrangements in the East, and, indeed, the appeal from the pulpit is more to Christian jingoism than to the purely humanitarian sentiment of the Christian Faithful.

CHAPTER IV.

CHRISTIAN EVANGELIZATION AND ISLAM.

Defective rendering of the Bible into some Muslim languages—Prophecy of a famous English statesman that Islam can only last a couple of hundred years more; If Islam dies out Christianity will not long outlive it—Simplicity of Islam its chief attraction—Renan's impression of a mosque—Mussulman's impressions of a Christian place of worship—Fashion and flirtation in Church; Contrary to Muslim ideas that women should pray along with men—The jingling of money invites the devil—Music itself not disparaged by Islam but objected to as part of divine service—Islam not hostile to the fine arts; Too much charlatanism in Christendom about the fine arts.

“Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.”

So ordains the Bible.¹ It is a well-known fact that this sacred book of Christians is translated into scores of languages with the sole object of evangelizing the whole world. Yet it is often complained by ardent Christians

1. St. Mark, xvi, 15.

44 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS.

that hundreds of millions of human beings have not yet been given the opportunity of enjoying the reading of the Bible in their own languages. We should think that with a view to meeting the requirements of these hundreds of millions of human beings, it is of prime importance that a due regard should be paid to the accuracy and the elegance of the translation of the Scriptures into the languages of non-Christian races. Whether due attention has hitherto been paid to this matter is a question which admits of grave doubt. On looking into a translation of the Holy Bible into our own language, we noticed to our amazement that the word "female," which first occurs somewhere at the beginning of Genesis, was rendered by a term that could not with propriety be applied to any woman, but only to a female beast. Similarly, the meaning of the word "creature" in the above Biblical quotation is, we fear, rather loosely understood by many Mussulmans who read the Bible in their own languages. By "every creature" is of course meant, every member of the human species, to the exclusion of the beasts, and indeed this fact is made clear from reading St. Matthew's Gospel, where it is clearly pointed out that the preaching should

CHRISTIAN EVANGELIZATION AND ISLAM. 45

be to "all nations."¹ What the evangelists of civilization really have to do, is to raise the condition of the inferior races of mankind (among whom Mussulmans, however unwillingly, are included) to the standard of Christian excellence.

The question whether there is any possibility of their becoming Christian, will now be under consideration. An English statesman and famous publicist (famous not so much for his wide learning as for the prominent part he takes in all political agitations on behalf of the Eastern Christians) is reported to have prophesied that Islam could only last a couple of hundred years more. By this, the learned Englishman could only have meant that the followers of Islam would either be wiped off the face of the earth by the conquering Powers of Christendom or else all be made Christians by the end of that period. "He who claims to know much, mistakes much," says a Turkish proverb, and the learned gentleman in question must, in any case, have been under some delusion when he indulged in such a rash anticipation. According to the most moderate estimates (and be it remarked here that these estimates are made by European authorities)

1. St. Matthew, xxviii, 19.

the number of human beings who adhere to the creed of Islam exceeds two hundred millions.¹ As far as we can observe, the armies of the European Powers in their struggles for territorial acquisitions can only kill ten or fifteen thousand Mussulmans a year, and this number is certainly not large enough to establish the accuracy of the learned gentleman's anticipations.

As to the problem of the conversion of Mussulmans, it should be stated that even the most enthusiastic among European and American missionaries admit that it is the hardest thing in the world to drive the devil out of the souls of these infidels, and inspire them with the sublime ideals of Christianity. It is quite certain that Islam will not readily avail itself of the blessing of baptism so ardently offered to the world by the proselytizers of Christendom. What form of religious thought will dominate the mind of man after a couple of hundred years' time is a weighty

1. Certain Englishmen, who are either clerics or religiously-minded politicians, compute, with reluctant condescension, this number to be something under two hundred millions. But Germans make somewhat different calculations. Thus Dr. Hurbert Jansen, in his painstaking statistics on the subject, computes the number of Mussulmans to be 260 millions. See his "Verbreitung des Isläm." Berlin, 1877.

problem on which we are unable to speculate with exactitude. But there is one point on which we make bold to utter a prophecy, and that is, if Islam dies out in the long run, Christianity will not long outlive it.

Thus the question of conversion should be totally dismissed from the mind. The Christian Church has failed in her multifarious endeavours of many centuries' duration to absorb even a few million Jews. We fail to perceive how she will do away in two hundred years' time with Islam, which is adhered to by over two hundred million individuals, who ardently believe in the excellence of the ethics of their faith, and for whom Islamism is not only a creed but has rather the force of a most ardently preserved national ideal. Besides, the more a Mussulman learns about Christianity as practised by the majority of its professed followers the less will he be inclined to embrace it.

Nothing has contributed so largely to the spread of Islam as the simplicity of its system; for Mussulmans there is nothing so attractive in their creed as its simple forms of devotion. There are undoubtedly certain superstitious rites and ceremonies connected

48 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS.

with its worship, but they are comparatively few, and indeed it is a curious revelation to anyone who enquires into the origin of these forms, to learn that they have been principally introduced into Islam by Jewish, Christian and other converts in bygone days. However, these superstitious rites have not much effect on the purity of the religion, for there is no priesthood, that motive power, as we may call it, which would perhaps find it advantageous to preserve their existence. In order to understand clearly the simplicity of the Muslim worship, let us suppose ourselves in a Mosque. There, we find that the devotional service is dignified and solemn, yet without ceremonies ; almost monotonously quiet, yet divinely impressive ; short, yet with an element of eternal earnestness. One man conducts the worship, reciting suitable passages from the Koran, and offering prayers, which the worshippers follow in profound silence. The congregation do not chant, and a musical instrument is considered an irreverent object in a place of worship, as, to the Muslim conception, a musical service is not compatible with the solemnity of devotion, and the mind must entirely be engaged with the supreme thought of the Most High *Allah*. Ernest Renan,

CHRISTIAN EVANGELIZATION AND ISLAM. 49

who had no more love for Islamism than for Christianity, once gave his impression of Muslim worship in these words: *Je ne suis jamais entré dans une Mosquée sans une vive émotion, le dirai-je? sans un certain regret de n'être pas Musulman.*¹ An English writer who has rendered much service to the missionary cause in the Orient, thus sums up his feelings about a Mosque: "No one can go into a Mussulman place of worship without being struck by the evidence of the sincerity, gravity, absorbedness, and solemnity of the worshippers."²

Now, if you will put yourself in the place of a Mussulman who has been brought up to practise religion in the manner we have been dealing with, and with this in your mind go to Church, you will get an idea of what would be his impressions, and you would be able to judge whether these impressions would inspire him with a genuine conviction which might lead him to embrace Christianity. You need not go to a fashionable Church if you are a conscientious objector to that odd connection

1. "L'Islamisme et la Science," p. 19. Paris 1883.

2. "Evangelization of the non-Christian World." R. N. Cust, p. 264.

50 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS.

between the snobbishness of fashion and the worship of God.

As you are supposed to be a new-comer to this Christian country from the Orient, you will perhaps excuse us if we give you a few hints as to the proper manner of going to Church. Dress as neatly as you can, and try to look clean, not only because cleanliness is next to godliness, especially at the time when you are going to worship God, but also because, in Christian countries, ladies go to the service along with men. Mind you, some of these ladies are divinely attractive. As far as the clean appearance is concerned there is nothing new for you to learn, as Islam itself orders strict ablutions before going to worship, but, for the ladies' sake, do not go to Church in your Oriental shabbiness.

When we said that ladies go to Church along with men, we have unconsciously hinted that in the Mussulman Orient women are not permitted to go to the Mosques. They are only allowed to go there on certain special occasions, and on these occasions they can only follow the prayers from a gallery assigned to their exclusive use. To a good Christian this must certainly appear to be a barbarous drawback of Islam and a typical example of the Oriental

tyranny. For him the presence of women makes the service heavenly and bright. From a Muslim point of view, however, it is not the brightness, but simple solemnity that is essential in the moment of devotion. The eyes as well as the mind of the worshipper must be directed towards the supreme Creator. When once the corner of the eye catches a bright female face, mischievous Satan enters the heart over which a Mussulman has apparently less control than a Christian. It is not a rare thing to hear young Christian women talking about some good-looking men they saw in Church the other day, and on more than one occasion we have heard young Christian men speaking admiringly about the pretty girls they noticed during the sermon on the previous Sunday.¹

The next important point which strikes our Oriental visitor is the internal picturesqueness of a Church. Indeed some of the Christian edifices of worship are so remarkably beautiful that they cannot fail to inspire with

1. "The Dean of —— Cathedral addressed a fervent appeal to the congregation on Sunday to pray that 'these young people who come here should not come to flirt.' It is to be feared that that cathedral is not an exception to other places of worship." From a leading article in the *Daily Telegraph* of 27 September, 1904.

52 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS

delight even a dull follower of Mohammed. As a matter of fact some of the great Mosques in Muslim countries are almost equally beautiful, but these Mosques are few in number, and they were built by absolute monarchs, who sought rather to glorify themselves than to show the extent of their piety, by the magnificence of the buildings founded by them. The usual appearance of a Mosque is bare, and nothing adorns it but a few inscriptions on its walls and the clean carpets on its floor. Now a man who is accustomed to worship in such a plain building, will, on entering a Church, be struck most of all by the pictures or by the beautiful stained glass of its windows. But he would wish to see them rather in a temple of idolaters than in the Church of Christ whom, as we have already pointed out, he venerates. The artistic representation of biblical history is of no consequence to him, and he would be stupefied to notice the nude figures of Adam and Eve on the windows of the Church represented in some Catholic Churches on the Continent.

The third point which draws the attention of the stranger in Church is the collection of money when the service is not quite over. The minister announces some details about

the amount of money previously collected and about the various expenditures. The stranger would think that this sort of business talk ought to be out of place in a sanctuary for the purpose of prayer. But it is the act of taking a collection which arouses a more peculiar amazement. In his Mosque such a thing could not be done, and although the income of the Mosques is comparatively much lower than that of Churches, no money must be seen during the prayers. The members of the congregation may give small coins to the begging mendicants, but this is only in going out of the Mosque. If charitable persons want to make donations to the place of worship, they may do so privately. The voice of supplication should not be polluted by the jingling of money, to which the devil lends a sharper ear than the greediest of men ; and when the devil is thus allowed to interfere with the conduct of worship, it is not serene thoughts of Heaven, but base worldly reflections that engage the worshipper's mind. The manner of the collection appears no less disagreeable to the Mussulman visitor. One man rushes to the door, as though to intercept the early departures who thoughtlessly start off at the beginning of the collection. Two

54 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS.

men go to both ends of each row, passing the purse from one side to the other, and fixing meanwhile their eagle eyes incessantly on the purse, as if they suspected you of drawing out money instead of dropping it into the purse. Surely these Church customs of the Christians will not make a favourable impression upon the Eastern visitor, whose conversion is expected, and if he can ever be converted, he will make, not a sincere believer, but a self-seeking hypocrite.

The above remarks on the music and artistic ornaments and sights of a Church should not be construed into a fanatical disparagement of the arts themselves. We quite believe that the Christian Church has contributed largely to the development and perfection of music and the pictorial arts among the Western nations. But we cannot allow ourselves to accept the contention that the genius of the West in respect of music and art would have remained sterile had not the Church extended her guidance and help to those who perfected them. On the contrary, we incline to believe those Western authors, who maintain that if it had not been for the hampering influence of the Church in

bygone times the progress of Europe in those directions, as well as in the direction of the sciences, would have begun much earlier. The *miracle* of the Christian Church has nothing to do with the progress of the West. In Christendom every third man of genius who distinguishes himself in science, art and music turns out to be not a follower of the Church but a Jew. Unmindful of the retrogressive influence of their own Church in the past, many ecclesiastical writers in Western Europe have ascribed to Islam a fanatical antagonism to the fine arts. The precepts of Islam do not prescribe the suppression of the natural proclivities of the human intellect. It is not music or art, but it is their introduction into religious worship that was not approved of in Islam. Many European investigators have spent much time and labour in compiling monumental works on the development of the fine arts in the world of Islam, but unfortunately these works lie almost untouched on the dusty shelves of great libraries, while trashy opinions of romancers and superficial impressionist travellers on the subject find credence among the majority of the Christian seekers after knowledge.

In the opening chapter of this book we stated that many adverse circumstances, not unrecorded in Eastern history, have caused the backward condition of the Mussulman nations. That they are very far behind the Christian nations in the matter of music and art as in other branches of modern progress is an indisputable fact. There are convincing indications that to make good their lost time they will have to learn much from progressive Christendom. They must, nevertheless, bear in mind that the much-glorified Western civilization has its seamy side, and that in proportion to the development of true genius, a corresponding degree of unscrupulous charlatanism is making headway. This unholy charlatanism is no less in evidence in the matter of art and music than in other departments of civilized society. Thus, for instance, among Western peoples, one can meet a vast number of individuals who, with an authoritative air, express grand opinions on painting or drawing, yet they are incapable of drawing even a small pig in the souvenir-book of their friend's child. They pretend to possess a cultivated taste for singing, and even advance critical views on the graceful manner of singing of this and that famous

singer of the time, yet if they themselves attempted to sing in a drawing-room, you would not be slow in concluding that there is a little more endurable harmony in the heehawing of a white Egyptian donkey than in the singing of such persons. They seem to understand the merits of this, and the failings of that well-known musician; if, however, they were to touch a piano you would admit that a German waiter in an English boarding-house beats the gong of the celebrated resurrection-pie supper to a more graceful tune than the musical performance of these pedantic worthies. May Providence save the East from such charlatanism must be our prayer!

CHAPTER V.

RIVALRY IN PROSELYTISM.

Rivalry of Islam in the sacred task of evangelization—What is the reason of its success? Not polygamy, nor moral laxity which equally exists everywhere—The Sword is not the cause of its spread; the Koran forbids forced conversion; spread of Christianity and Islam in China offers an example—How the millions of Christians in Turkey escaped the sword in bygone times—“Thralldom arranged with satanic skill”—Temporal power not the cause of the success of the Muslim creed; India an example—Restrictions on the liberty of Muslims in Uganda—Is slavery a cause of the successful rivalry of Islam? Denunciation of slavery a missionary weapon.

IN the preceding chapter we have only shown the impossibility of evangelizing Islam. But the vitality of this faith does not assert itself solely in holding its own ground; it also carries on a rival proselytism all over the world. The rivalry of Islam is a serious problem which presents itself very awkwardly to the Divines of the Christian Church, and makes their chance of converting the whole world somewhat dubious. It appears, however, that they are determined to overcome this mischievous rivalry

at any cost, and consequently no measures are considered by them too drastic in fulfilling their sacred task, the Lord's command as regards the Christianization of all nations being explicit and obligatory. Accordingly, when pacific methods are of no avail the work of Christian missions must be carried on under the protection of the big pounders and rapid firers of the Great Christian Powers, who give practical exhibitions of the might and glory of Christian civilization in the midst of barbarism and heathendom. In recent years missionary enterprise had on some occasions to be carried on in this way when peaceful evangelization had no satisfactory results.

How is it that the superstitious creed of the Arabian "impostor" can compete with Christianity, God's true religion? Are there not powerful missionary societies in Christendom with thousands of well-trained, sufficiently paid and enterprising servants sent out to all regions of the world? Are there not hundreds

I. The following table is taken from the article "Missions" in Chambers' *Encyclopaedia*:

<i>Missionary Societies or Churches.</i>	<i>Their income.</i>	<i>Number of Missionaries.</i>
Great Britain	23 £932,156	2,658
America	30 £781,393	2,127
Germany and } Switzerland }	17 £142,423	559
Other European countries }	8 £23,427	96

of thousands of faithful subscribers in prosperous Christian countries to support the sacred work of these societies? What is, then, the cause of the evident success of the rival creed which is so miserably lacking in the same advantages? The true reason will always remain incomprehensible so long as the Christian Church is disinclined to criticise the causes of the spread of Islam without prejudice and so long as her adherents continue to believe that the possession of material advantages has so much to do with securing the conversion of non-Christian men to their creed.

Many reasons have, however, been offered by the opponents of Islam to explain the rivalry, and the explanations have almost always been given by them with an air of impartiality and philosophic disavowal of bias. We purpose here to consider the observations of these "disinterested" critics on the chief causes of the rivalry.

Polygamy, which is uniformly thought to be a means of securing carnal commodities, is regarded as one of these causes. When dealing with the position of women in Islam we shall treat the question of polygamy in detail. We can only say here that to maintain that many persons go over to Islam because

it allows polygamy is as nonsensical as to maintain that many persons are disinclined to embrace Christianity because it does not justify the same practice. Supposing this notion about Islamic polygamy to be quite correct in the case of men, how should we explain the frequent conversion of women to Islam? As is the case in Christianity, in Islam, too, a woman is denied the refreshing choice of an extra husband even if her first husband turns out to be a tyrannical monster or a hideous bore. The argument of Christian critics is this: that as the sole object of polygamy is to satisfy the desire of sensuality, when a man becomes a Mussulman he can easily resort to that attractive practice. Why a man should find it more difficult to realise his voluptuous desires without taking the trouble of turning Mussulman and bringing upon himself the risks and worries of maintaining a second wife it is hard to understand.

It is a very unchivalrous charge on the part of Christian critics to say that moral laxity is a cause of the spread of Islam. It is also an injudicious charge which is certain to invite rebuke. There is no lack of evidence to prove that such a moral laxity is more noticeable in Christian countries than in the

Muslim East. An impartial moralist who observes the mode of life prevailing among Christians and Mussulmans would not find it difficult to show that the balance of a shaky morality weighs a little more perceptibly on the Christian side. The very nature of the social structure of a Christian community affords more convenient scope for those who may seek sensual amusements. We must refrain from entering into the delicate details of incriminating circumstances. We should only like to remind our readers that the traffic in white-slaves is an occupation which is not taken up by Mussulmans although it is known by them to be a very lucrative commerce.* It is undeniable that *maisons publiques* are opened in some Mussulman towns, but their management is conducted and their staff supplied by persons who are not Mussulmans; and, curiously enough, whenever the establishment of such places is opposed by Mussulmans, their managers are sure to receive the support of the Embassies and Consulates of the Christian states to which they are subject, and they may even try to exact indemnity from the Mussulman authorities if their trade suffers from such "fanatical" interference. In Mussulman towns any house which is suspected

of uses contrary to the rules of morality is bound to be raided by the inhabitants of the locality in which it is situated. According to the old Mussulman law persons accused of adultery were to be stoned. But the Governments of the Mussulman countries to which we have alluded, have copied the laws of some civilized Powers of Christian Europe which do not prescribe any punishment for the persons caught in a house thus raided, unless the moral offence is accompanied by violence. Nevertheless the Muslim people carry out their unofficial and unauthorised raids and thus bring such universal disgrace and opprobrium upon persons charged with an offence against chastity, that their treatment could scarcely invite a person to turn Mussulman if by so doing he hopes to find a domain where he may satisfy his lust more freely than in his original community.

No, the society of Islam does not afford sufficient facilities to persons of loose morals, as is maintained by some of its Christian critics.

In connection with the rivalry of the creed of the Prophet the sword is represented

64 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS

as playing an important part in its propagation. In other words, in the opinion of the ecclesiastics as well as religiously-minded politicians of Christendom, Islam is spread by the force of the sword. This view, too, is accepted by the great bulk of the Christian public without any critical examination. For some reason or other the sword is particularly represented as the handiest means of propagating Islam when the persecution of the Eastern Christians is in question.

Therefore if you are interested in political agitations started against one Muslim country or another on behalf of this persecuted people you should bear this fact in mind, and when you are thundering forth your humanitarian opinions against such an outrage you can base your arguments upon this "conversion by the sword" in all your speeches, sermons and articles. For doing this successfully we should advise you to take up a translation of the Koran and cull from it, as diligently as you can, some suitable passages to prove that Islam orders the persecution of those who do not embrace it. In politics such dexterous methods are quite justifiable. We have known several Right Honourable and Right Reverend gentlemen who have employed these methods

during the Eastern troubles in the past, a fact which clearly shows that when sacred Christian interests are concerned the end must justify all means you employ. If a Mussulman comes forward to denounce your methods and charge you with unrighteous misrepresentation of the Koran and Islam, take no notice of his impertinence, as well becomes the dignity of a civilized Christian. There is no sound reason why you should feel abashed at being contradicted by that barbarian, as the mind of the Christian public is well accustomed to receive with credulity everything said against him and his accursed faith. If, in defence of Islam, he ventures to argue with you in great Christian papers, their Editors will, in all probability, throw the second, if not the first, letter of that Oriental bore into the waste-paper basket, while on the other hand they will spare valuable columns to your voluminous letters.

The above is the most practical suggestion we can give you. If, however, you do not care to sacrifice the truth to political exigencies and wish to know what the book of Islam really says about the treatment of unbelievers, we may refer you to the following passages:

"Summon men to the sway of thy Lord

with wisdom and kindly warning. Dispute with them in the kindest manner¹." "Wilt thou force men to become believers²?" "Let there be no compulsion³."

Islam is spread by the force of the sword, as the tale runs in Christendom, and of course the creed of the Christian Church by miracles. As a marvellous species of Divine mystery, however, these miracles were not so markedly in evidence from the days of the Apostles down to the time of such tyrants as Constantine, when the sword began to render valuable service to the proselytism of that Church. We should like to ask those who maintain that the religion of Muhammed was diffused at the point of the sword, whether China has ever been overrun by any Mussulman Power which could carry forcible proselytism into that country. According to the estimate made in 1878 by a French authority⁴ the number of Chinese Mussulmans exceeds twenty millions. The later European authorities raise this number to something between thirty and thirty-five millions. The Muslim proselytism in China was begun in

1. Koran, XVI. 126. 2. Koran, X. 100 3. Koran, II. 257.

4. M. de Thiersant, formerly French Chargeé d'affaires in Peking. See the preface of his *Mahométisme en Chine*.

the seventh century, and it was more or less about the same time that Nestorian Christians carried on active missionary work in China. Let us suppose that both Christianity and Islam were religions of the sword and that propagandists of both parties had heavenly opportunities for fulfilling their bloodthirsty task in China. Why, then, for Heaven's sake, did not the Christian miracles work the same wonders as Islam? In the sixteenth, and more especially in the nineteenth century, Christian propaganda received very effective support from the religious bodies in Christendom; yet the number of the Chinese who profess Christianity to-day is sadly insignificant when compared with the number of those who follow Islam.

Changing the scene of enquiry from China to the Malay Archipelago we find that several millions of the natives of various islands embraced Islam, and this in spite of the obstructions created by the Christian states which for centuries had enjoyed paramount influence in those regions, and in spite of the fact that no Muslim fleet has ever carried fire and sword beyond the Indian Sea.

In the empire of the Turks (where the "extermination" of the Christian populations

is a fact which is often vouched for in Christendom) there are to-day several million native Christians possessing their national Church and their ancient traditions. If the religion of Islam prescribed forcible conversion no power on earth could have saved these Christians from the sword of Turkey in the centuries gone by, and, in consequence, no European politician or cleric could now find a ready opportunity for displaying his passionate eloquence on their behalf on the grounds of humanity and civilization. It was not the bravery of the native Christian, it was not the miraculous power of the Christian Church, that saved the Oriental Christians from being forced to embrace Islam, but it was those passages of the Koran, which we have just quoted, that guaranteed the inviolability of their Church against compulsory molestation.

Those Christian critics who identify the sword with the Crescent ought to know that the sword of Islam has long since been broken ; while the sword of the Christian, which is now brandished with typical white-jingo prowess all over the world, is sharper than ever. For example, in India there is no possibility of displaying the sword of Islam nowadays, as the country is under Christian rule, and

missionaries find there a perfectly unrestricted field of proselytism. Nevertheless, in the work of conversion, Mussulmans are as successful as, and indeed in some localities much more so than, the Christian Missionaries. The authenticity of this statement is endorsed by many Europeans well acquainted with Indian affairs. The success of the rival propaganda must tell upon the temper of some of the Christian evangelists who, unable to ascribe the cause of Islam's rivalry in India to the sword, express their sentiments of disdain towards the rival creed in the following strain : "Where Muhammedanism holds the people in its thraldom," says one of these pious men, "it stands forth immovable with all the features of lust and cruelty. When, in the Providence of God, its time will come and Islam bow its head beneath the yoke of the Cross, no one can tell ; that the day may be hastened must be our prayer."¹ Here is what another angelic preacher of the Gospel says on the subject : "the Muslim religious conception is a thraldom arranged with wonderful satanic skill, first to snare, then to prevent rescue ; Muhammedanism is a .

1. *The Evangelization of the non-Christian world*
R. N. Cust, p. 266.

mighty system invented by the Devil to counterfeit the Gospel, a master-piece of satanic ingenuity.”¹ Let us now hear what a dollar-worshipper, who hailed from across the Atlantic to evangelize the East, says: “With one hundred of these men (“a Christian gathering in America”) willing to endure hardness, and *twenty thousand pounds* to send them out, God could shake the very pillars of Muhammed’s temple and bring glory to His Son by wrenching Arabia from the grasp of Satan.”²

We once drew the attention of a clergyman friend of ours to this style of controversy. He admitted the atrociousness of the attack and said with emphasis, “It is wrong. We do not even approve of calling Muhammed a false Prophet nowadays.” Doubtless this improvement in the controversial etiquette of Christendom is gratifying to hear. But what is the exact reason of this change of front? Is it that the ways of the world are becoming gentler and more courteous? Or, has the time arrived when international civilities may be extended to those races of mankind who live outside the pale of civilized Christendom? Both

1. *The Evangelization of the non-Christian world*, R. N. Cust, p. 266.

2. See *The Evangelization of the world in this Generation*, John R. Mott, p. 145.

of these hypotheses seem to us to be improbable, and there are strong indications to show that the Christian apologists must have given up the idea of insulting Muhammed and his system, because coarse prejudices could only spoil their own case, and would bring grave doubts upon the sincerity of the humanitarian motives by which they claim to be prompted in pioneering Christian civilization in the East.

The independence and political power of any Muslim nation is also thought to have something to do with the spread of Islam, and therefore the speedier the termination of that independence and power, the surer, it is considered, will be the check on the spread of Islam. Let us take the case of Turkey as an example. The civilized Powers of Christendom must always find some new "outstanding claims" to settle in that country; their gentle arts of diplomacy sometimes fail to settle them amicably; then their bluff begins in earnest; the meeting of that terrible concert of Europe is threatened and the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire is talked of seriously. The Christian war-ships steam away towards the

72 THE CRESCENT VERSUS THE CROSS.

Levant waters ; Muslims are made to resume their never-to-be finished work of “extermination” of their Christian compatriots ; and the voice of indignation against the Turkish “atrocities” is raised in Christendom. You can then see a tremendous excitement in the rank and file of the Churchmen. It is not because they have much admiration for the international intrigues in the East, although as good patriots they may wish to see the country to which they belong secure a share in the greedy scramble which is expected, but because a final blow may be dealt to a Muslim state which is regarded as a pillar in the march of Islam. The notion is a mistaken one. “The total loss of temporal power would probably strengthen rather than weaken Muhammedanism.”¹ A scholarly enthusiast of the Christian jingoism says, “the political prestige of Muhammedanism is departed. But it is to be feared that the spiritual influences brought into play by the European powers are comparatively puny and ineffective ”² to check the spread of Islam.

It appears that neither the above quoted

1. *Concise Dictionary of Religious Knowledge*, p. 601.
New York, 1891.

2. *Muhammedan Controversy*, Sir William Muir, p. 100.

warnings nor the instances recorded in history can teach the agitators of Christendom the simple fact that the spread of a religion does not invariably depend on the support given by an independent Power. They will go on trying to bring about the destruction of every vestige of the Muslim independence, but their pious efforts will not be crowned with much success. With this object in view they may urge a savage native ruler of Uganda, a converted Christian fanatic, "to pledge himself to make Christianity the one dominant religion of his country, forbidding Muhammadanism under penalty of death."¹ But they could not induce a humane Lawrence to destroy a great Mosque in India by which means it was imagined Muslim influence might be suppressed.² Such drastic methods of barbarism would prove to be productive of results detrimental to the cause of Islam only in the territories conquered by Russia, where Mosques have been destroyed "by the right of conquest and in accordance with the spirit of the times."³ If, however,

1. Dr. Carl Peters, *New Lights upon Dark Africa*, p. 403.
2. R. Bosworth-Smith, *Life of Lord Lawrence*, vol. II., p. 248.
3. Eugene Smirnoff, Chaplain to the Russian Embassy in London, *Russian Orthodox Missions*, p. 10.

a time comes when the peoples of the Russian Empire break away from the absolute domination of the Holy Synod and acquire a liberal constitution and freedom of conscience, the change will be but beneficial to the progress of Islam.

The institution of slavery is also stated by some Christian writers to be a useful means of Islamic proselytism. As the conscience of civilized mankind is in open revolt against slavery it is no wonder that Christian critics make this barbarous heritage of antiquity a convenient *point d'appui* in their onslaught on Islamism. By these tactics they hope to attain two distinct objects: namely, to incriminate Islam for favouring the inhuman practice of slavery and to clear their own Church from the shame of such responsibility. Although the condemnation of this practice is made on humanitarian grounds we shall, when dealing with the question of Islamic slavery, examine whether the philanthropy of the promoters of the anti-slavery movement is not a little farcical.

CHAPTER VI.

CAUSES OF SUCCESSFUL RIVALRY IN PROSELYTIZING.

In heathendom, Christian proselytism less successful than that of Islam ; no supernatural advantage is the reason of the Islamic success—Simplicity of the Muslim system appeals more strongly to the pagan—Islam has only one propaganda, but the rivalry in proselytizing of various Christian Churches puzzles the non-Christian world—Anyone can turn Mussulman without any formalities of conversion—Many converts drawn to Islam for its democratic institutions—Absence of colour prejudices helps propagation of Islamism ; White proselytizers cannot intermarry with coloured heathen, though intermarriage is the best means of proselytizing—European converts to Islam ; their conversion is not the result of any missionary effort—Charge of eccentricity against Islamized Europeans ; Social ostracism as a preventive against Englishmen becoming Muslims.

That in uncivilized or semi-civilized heathendom, where the rivalry between Christian and Muslim propaganda is very acute, the latter not rarely gains the upper hand, is a fact admitted even by those who con-

fidently cherish the hope of christianizing the whole world. We wish to examine here the chief causes of this successful rivalry from points of view which have hitherto been either deliberately or unconsciously overlooked by Christian writers.

Has the creed of Muhammed any supernatural advantages over the religion of Christ? We imagine it has not. In this cultured age it is superfluous to contend for the supernatural *influence* of one's own creed, as no enlightened man could allow himself to be guided by the ingenious arguments and pompous phraseology employed in support of such an irrational contention. We have no scientific evidence at our disposal to prove the truth of Islam positively. There are in Christendom some persons who find no contradiction between science and the Biblical narratives; on the contrary they prove the authenticity of these narratives by scientific evidence. Although some of these persons are sincere religious enthusiasts, there are some others of practical mind who find it advantageous to themselves to follow at once the teachings of science and those of religion. It is not seldom that one meets with a learned man who may have a chair in a university and may lecture on,

for example, geology. He describes from his professorial chair the formation of the Earth's mountains and rocks, although his description of the periods of the formation of the mountains and rocks does not exactly corroborate the scriptural details on the subject. This learned professor may also happen to be in Holy Orders, and may have clerical duties by which he earns extra money. In his capacity of divine he must occasionally ascend the pulpit, where he may talk about the "impregnable rock of the Holy Scripture." It is quite natural for such a learned Christian to try as far as possible to reconcile the Christian religion with science. We are unfortunately incapable of following the example of such talented men, and therefore will not attempt to give scientific evidences of the truth of the religion of Islam.

Islam has some qualities which appeal strongly to many minds. It is not a religion of complex doctrine, and its evident simplicity is an advantage which cannot fail to win adherents. A pagan, whose conversion is coveted by proselytizers of both Islam and Christianity, may be a semi-civilized or un-

civilized African. Unenlightened as he is it does not follow that he is also unintelligent, therefore he can judge which of the religions offered him is more comprehensible to his reason. The Muslim conception of God is explained to him. The Koran says that there is but *one* God Who "begetteth not, neither is He begotten," and there can be no time or place for Him, though the power of this Almighty Creator can be seen any time anywhere. The founder of Islam has no blood relation with God in any mystical sense whatsoever. If on the other hand that intelligent African were to open the Bible and ask the missionary who wants to convert him, to explain the meaning of "Father, Son and Holy Ghost," he will perhaps give him much information on the subject, but the heathen will not understand the details given. Indeed, if all the books which have been written on the subject during many centuries of the Christian era and which would form a great pyramid if put together, were to be consulted, no satisfactory explanation could be found which might convince a non-Christian enquirer of the true significance of those three words. Then the final effort of the evangelizing Christian would consist in the demand that

SUCCESSFUL RIVALRY IN PROSELYTIZING. 79

the unbeliever should have faith, without which a genuine conversion could not of course be effected. Unfortunately, however, a large number of human beings who are not sufficiently sound-minded to appreciate picturesque mysticism, and who cannot therefore conceive the reasonableness of the missionary's demand, go over to Islam, which creed they perhaps find less complex. Hence an opportunity for Islam to capture converts.

Islam, which has but one God, has also one principal propaganda to invite the heathen; while, on the other hand, the different Christian proselytizers propagate various forms of Christianity. Thus in the field of evangelization one can see Catholics, or Roman Catholics as some people are pleased to call them, members of the Greek Orthodox Church, and Protestants. Besides this, some denominations of Protestantism have separate missionary work of their own Churches,—a droll sight for a non-Christian. It looks as if many ultra-religious enthusiasts were vain enough to wish to establish a Christianity of their own at the moment of the effervescence of their ecstatic minds, basing, however, their views on the teaching of Christ with discretion. We say with discretion, because none of those

vain Prophets could venture to go so far as to proclaim himself a second Christ. The danger of being burned on a slow fire, or at any rate of being exposed to the opprobrium of the whole Christian world, would prevent him from such an adventure.

Be this as it may, as there is no harmony of Christian endeavour in the fields of conversion it must be an interesting puzzle for a heathen to find out which of the forms of Christianity offered him is the true one. The perplexity of his mind would grow profounder when he observed that there is also an inter-Christian rivalry of proselytism which is as acute as the rivalry between Islam and Christianity. The case would appear to him still more curious if he knew that when a Christian goes over from one demomination to another he would very likely be required by the priests of his new Church to be confirmed, as though his former Church were not recognised by Jesus Christ.

A person who wants to turn Mussulman will not be handicapped by such wearisome rites and forms. His conversion must be effected by himself alone, as the Mussulman missionary is a teacher who may instruct him in the matter of religion but he is not

SUCCESSFUL RIVALRY IN PROSELYTIZING. 81

a priest and has no power to receive a convert into his Church. As soon as a person openly professes that he has become Mussulman, his new co-religionists must recognise him as such. If, however, they discover the insincerity of his profession, naturally they do not believe in such wicked cant.

We may be reminded here that though there may be no difficulty at all for a woman to become a Mussulman, a man must go through an unpleasant ordeal on embracing Islam. Our answer to this is simple. There is no absolute stipulation in the religious law of Islam to enjoin the exercise of that ordeal. Muhammed accepted the Semitic custom of circumcision not on devotional but on utilitarian grounds. Circumcision is regarded as a healthy custom and indeed its healthiness is recognised by many medical men in Christendom. We understand that even in the Jewish Church circumcision, unlike baptism, is not a sacrament.¹ In Islam it is rigidly enforced on little boys, but for adults who turn Mussulman it is often discarded, as in their case its utility to health is dubious. It is one of the best known traditions of Muhammed that the care of health must

1. *The Jewish Encyclopaedia*, vol. IV., p. 95.

outweigh the precepts of faith, as if a man's health is once injured he may be incapacitated from discharging the duties enjoined on him by religion, towards his God and fellow-beings. Accordingly considerations of health nullify the exercise of the strongest of religious obligations, not to say of customs such as circumcision.

The democracy of Islam is an advantage which must form one of its attractions in gaining converts. It is not a democracy in the political sense ; it is not a democracy wrested by force by the populace from tyrants and a predominant caste. It is a privilege of equality bestowed by the religion of Islam upon all those who profess it. A well known German Orientalist writing about the democratic relations prevailing among all Mussulmans says "In the presence of the Almighty extramundane God all mortals are on one absolute equality ; whosoever went over to Islam received the same rights and undertook the same duties as the highest and the meanest believer." "Islam is a kind of caste ; once

1. Theodor Nöldeke, *Sketches from Eastern History*, p. 13.

SUCCESSFUL RIVALRY IN PROSELYTIZING. 83

you are admitted to it, you are the equal of everyone else within it.”¹ Speaking of its influence in British India, a Western writer says “the missionaries of Islam do not ask him (“a Hindu”) to abandon his caste but only to exchange his caste for theirs, the largest, the most strictly bound and the proudest of all. . . . Once in this caste the Hindu convert would be the brother of all within it, hailed as an equal and treated as an equal, even up to that point on which the European theory of equality always breaks down, the right of intermarriage. John Brown, who died for the negro slave, would have killed his daughter rather than see her marry a negro.”²

Class distinctions which exist so markedly even among the most liberal of Christian communities are never favoured by Muslim races. In some countries in Christendom even individuals who have succeeded in joining what is called the upper class by smarter enterprise are not slow in assuming an aristocratic air, looking down with something like contempt upon those who have remained in a humbler situation, and keeping them away from their so-called higher society. That unwholesome

1. *Islam*, Stanley Lane-Poole, p. 36.

2. *Asia and Europe*,” p. 55. Meredith Townsend.

vulgarity so characteristic of Western poorer classes is unknown in a Mussulman community, because there is no such arrogant and presumptuous caste to keep away the poorer members of its race and to deny to them the chances of acquiring improved habits by establishing a friendly intercourse. The discrepancies of habits and manners observable between the privileged caste and the poorer, or, as they call it, lower, class of a Christian nation are so great that one might almost mistake the different classes for the members of different races.

The Koran justifies the superiority of but one class of persons over the rest of humanity,¹ and these are the people who adorn the gift of intelligence with culture and learning. The men of learning whom Muhammed describes as the "heirs of the Prophets" constitute an intellectual hierarchy whose rank he declares to be "the highest of all classes." Besides this no class of individuals can be recognized as superior. It should be remarked that the decorated and uniformed officials of Oriental autocrats should not be mistaken for an aristocratic caste, though they may assume an air of aristocratic supremacy. An

^{1.} Koran, 39, 12.

SUCCESSFUL RIVALRY IN PROSELYTIZING. 85

absolute monarch may raise his most wicked or most ignorant parasites to the highest position in his kingdom. We are dealing with the rules of Islam on the subject* and not with the ways of these tyrannical rulers. Those scholarly Europeans who study Muslim literature can testify how strongly tyrants are condemned by Muhammed. Here we quote one of his sayings on this subject. He said, "Tyrants are not of us."

The absence of colour prejudice in Islam is another advantage by which Muslim proselytism is more successful than that of the white races among the dark races of mankind. The Anglo-Saxons, who surpass all other Christian races in missionary enterprise, are proud of their white skin, and the feeling of repugnance with which they regard the darker species of humanity would prevent them from treating an African or Chinese with a genuine sense of equality. A white Christian may, at times, extend his patronising sympathies to the coloured people of the world whose salvation appears to be a divine trust in his charge; but to condescend to fraternise with them would suit neither his refined taste nor his

civilizing policy. The case is different with those under the banner of Islam. A yellow skinned man of Turkestan or China, a dark skinned man of India or West Africa, and a white man of Asia Minor or Roumelia, regard one another, as Mussulmans, with feelings of perfect equality. In the world of Islam the difference in the colour of men's skins is not thought to be a deliberate design on the part of nature to mark out the superiority or inferiority of their kind.

As we are discussing the influence of colour-hatred upon the spread of religion in non-Christian countries we may be reminded that such a hatred is essentially against the spirit of Christianity and that missionaries of the Christian Church would not allow themselves to be guided by such unchristian-like prejudices. We have nothing to say against the first part of this proposition. But how far the white preachers of the Christian religion abroad can free themselves from the same prejudice, which is practically

1. Those Occidentals who think Turkey is situated in Central Africa are quite right in supposing that Ottoman Turks are a coloured race. But the reason why an intellectual organ of Christian jingoism such as the *Spectator* should persistently represent the Turks as a coloured people is that it suits the policy of that journal to paint the Turks always black.

SUCCESSFUL RIVALRY IN PROSELYTIZING. 87

an inborn feeling of their race, is a question which requires to be considered.

When Mussulman propagandists go out to invite a people to embrace Islam it never occurs to them to ask whether these people are black, or tawny, or yellow, and so they cast in their lot with them, settle among them, often permanently, and intermarry with them. These propagandists may belong to the Arab race, which has played a very great part in the history of mankind, and may therefore have greater reason to be proud of the achievements of their own race in the past than have some of the so-called white nations of Europe. As Mussulmans they do not believe in the theory of "superior" and "inferior" race in the sense which is expounded by the Christian jingoes in modern times. The Christian evangelizers, on the other hand, go to some parts of Asia and Africa for a certain period, to carry on their mission. They do their best to mix with the "natives," but not in the same way as their Muslim rivals. With the hope of improving the condition of those inferior races, they try to have a philanthropic share in the "white man's burden," but, unfortunately, among the people of Asia and Africa the

white man's burden is understood in the sense of the burden of the white man forcibly placed upon the shoulders of the coloured people. Therefore their charitable care and civilizing efforts are seldom rightly appreciated by the dark heathen who, however ignorant and simple-minded he may be, has a sense of shrewdness which detects in these efforts not a fraternal sympathy but an obliging air of superiority and guardianship. Personal dignity is not the God-sent heritage of the white Christian; the coloured heathen must have a share in it, and for this reason he would not like to receive the patronising care of those who could not really regard him as their equal. Consequently in case of an ailment, for instance, he would prefer to get the wonder-working amulet of the Mussulman proselytizer rather than the medical help of the Christian missionary, although, of course, in purging the Devil out of his suffering body the medical exorcism of the missionaries is much more effective than the Mussulman's amulet.

Another and a very serious drawback to the enterprise of the white missionary is his natural dislike for settling permanently among the coloured natives and intermarrying with

them. He would certainly not like to spend all his life among them. He would long to return to his country where clericalism, his own profession, is powerful. In return for his Christian endeavours abroad he would hope for promotion in the order of his Church at home, and, if fate smiles on him, he might expect a bishopric. If he is an Englishman he might even aspire to a seat in the House of Lords, and, then, his Lordship would spend the rest of his life in the bishop's palace in a thoroughly aristocratic fashion. Quite naturally a white missionary of such lofty disposition would not dream of settling among and intermarrying with the coloured races, in spite of the fact that intermarriage is the best means of successful proselytizing.

In connection with the subject of the rival proselytism between Islam and the Christian Church a few remarks should be made on the question of the conversion of numerous Europeans to the faith of Islam. From the Middle Ages down to the time when the influence of Christendom in the Mussulman East was just beginning to be felt, a large number of persons from different parts

of Europe went over to the East, settled there and embraced the Muslim faith. In the Turkish Empire, in particular, some of these refugees rose to the highest position in the state. A conspicuous feature in the writings of old European travellers in the East is the way in which these converts are all represented as being unscrupulous adventurers who turned Mussulman simply in order to gain favour and fortune. It is also maintained that these apostates displayed a greater dislike to the ways of Christians than did the born Muslim. Why did they hate them so much? Simply because (judging by what these Christian travellers allege) they wanted to gain the good graces of the fanatical Mussulmans by showing an unusually strong dislike of their former co-religionists. There was another, and more conceivable reason for their dislike, on which these pious old travellers did not touch, and that was that, as Occidentals, they knew better than did the Oriental Mussulmans the ways of Christendom of their time, which were apparently not so praiseworthy as the ways of Christian Europe of to-day.

Things are different nowadays, and any Western adventurer in the East can realize

his ambition better by remaining Christian and under the protection of his Christian government. Islam is not now in a position to promote his interests. Yet hardly a year passes in which a considerable number of Europeans do not adopt the religion of Muhammed. America is also "infected with Islamism." All these European and American converts do not go to the Mussulman East to seek their fortunes. They are mostly people of position and means. Islam has no missionary societies which could send out agents to Europe and America to buy up the consciences of any of these converts. The Western adherents of Islam are persons of education. The excessive condemnation of Islam in the literatures of Christendom has its reaction, and it is possible that those educated men or women who are interested in religious questions may grow curious to find out the causes of the hostile criticism of Islam. When they refer to unbiassed sources they discover not only grounds which refute the charges of the Christian critics, but also the favourable influence of Islam upon the conduct of mankind. Accordingly some of them adhere to Islam of their own free will.

As the motive of European converts to

Islam in the past was uniformly attributed to fortune-hunting, so in our time most Occidental adherents of that faith are accused of eccentricity; in other words, something is always found to be wrong with the minds of such converts. The famous "Emperor of Sahara" may be an eccentric man and a Lady Hester Stanhope may be accused of madness. But we are in a position to say that those lawyers, medical men and literary men who have adopted Islam are gifted with no less saneness than those Christian critics who attribute their conversion to eccentricity or weakness of mind.

There are known to be Englishmen and women who have leanings towards Islam, but who nevertheless have insufficient freedom of will to face the social anathemism which would certainly be brought upon them, should they turn Mussulmans. In Russia a Christian is punished who denounces the Russian Orthodoxy and adopts another religion. There is but little difference between intimidation and the force of law to prevent a person from accepting any new faith he chooses, and the threat of social ostracism directed particularly against those who choose to embrace Islam. If there is state intolerance

SUCCESSFUL RIVALRY IN PROSELYTIZING. 93

in autocratic Russia there are many individuals in free England who, while favouring the foundation of mission stations in all Mussulman countries, would not suffer the spread of Islam among English men and women.



CHAPTER VII.

ON THE POSITION OF MUSLIM WOMEN.

Paradise not closed to women—Superstitious notions suggested to women by priests—Bible orders women to submit to their husbands' will unconditionally—Just legislation made by Muhammed concerning the position of women ; the status of Christian women only began to be improved in recent times—Women's evidence of little validity judicially ; psychological reasons why women hide the truth—Monetary guarantee to be given to women about to be married—The veiling of women enjoined in the Scriptures ; the veil as a protection against unchivalrous behaviour—Changes are required in the restrictions imposed on women, but European customs must not be made a model. European girls no more free in selecting the man of their choice than are Eastern girls ; greed of mothers in matrimonial arrangements.

"Look at this man," said an English lady, pointing to an Arab, who, leaving his camel to look after itself for a little while, was praying absorbedly on the sand by the side of the Sudan railway. We were sitting in the dining-car of the train which was going north from Khartoum. The Arab appeared

ON THE POSITION OF MUSLIM WOMEN. 95

utterly unmindful of the gaze of the passing travellers. We asked this lady if the man's devotional prostration in the open seemed strange to her. She did not think so; on the contrary she viewed such ways of Muslims sympathetically, and she told us that when in Khartoum she remonstrated with the European missionaries residing in that place, for directing their efforts to make these people ("Muslim") change their faith and ways. Thereupon one of the missionaries expressed the hope that she did not like the idea that her sisters under the sway of Islam should have no chance of entering paradise. According to the religion of Islam, (so this missionary explained to her) women have no souls and therefore they can have no access to paradise, that privilege having been reserved for the superior male sex alone.

It is a fact that even a most picturesque story may lose its interest when it is too much vulgarized, and we feel sure that the critics of Islam can no longer enlist the sympathies of enlightened people for their cause by repeating this old fable of "women without souls."¹ Who among God's various

1. In the introduction to his translation of the Koran (p. 80) George Sale refutes the "falsehood of a vulgar imputa-

creatures have souls and who have not is a weighty scientific question, the solution of which is beyond our capacity. But women are known to possess souls, and indeed some of them have very noble souls, therefore the joys of eternal life shall not be denied to them in the paradise of Islam. No Mussulman will ever dispute this point. Judging, however, from the crying testimony of ill-treated lovers some women appear to have no heart, and it would be fitting justice on the part of Providence if those heartless women were denied the enjoyments of paradise for their behaviour in this world.

The influence of ecclesiastics has, in all ages, been greater among females than among the male sex. "Religious belief is nothing but a suggestion," says a writer, "women are more predisposed to religious suggestions than men. Religious ideas are suggested to women by men, and priests are

tion on the Muhammedans who are by several writers reported to hold that women have no souls." We can discover the origin of the false report of these writers by reading the history of Jevdet Pasha (Bit. Mus. Library, Turk. 9, Vol. I. p. 265). He says, "The people who are called Nousseiree live in various regions of Syria.....They pretend to be Muslims. They practise their rites secretly. It is one of their strange beliefs that women have no souls."

ON THE POSITION OF MUSLIM WOMEN. 97

always men."¹ Thus, when the preacher relates to the Christian lady how greatly the position of her sex is lowered by the law of Islam she shows herself quite uncritical in receiving his narrative. Voltaire was perfectly right when he said that "We have imputed to the Koran a great number of foolish things which it never contained. It was chiefly against the Turks, who happened to be Muhammedans, that our priests wrote so many books. Our authors, who are much more numerous than Janissaries, have no great difficulty in ranging our women on their side. They persuade them that Muhammed regarded them as merely intelligent animals, and that by the laws of Islam they were all slaves, having no property in this world, nor any share in the paradise of the next. The falsehood of all this is evident; yet it has all been believed."²

We do not intend to ignore the fact that the book of Islam asserts the supremacy of man which has incontestably been bestowed upon him by nature. Unlike the Bible,

1. Lombroso, *La Femme Criminelle*, ch. vi.

2. See the article 'Alkoran' in Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary*.

however, it does not regard the natural disadvantages of women in the light of a divine punishment.¹ Voltaire could not with justice be accused of too great harshness in applying the term "falsehood" to those authors who attributed to the Koran debasing regulations concerning the position of the female sex. It is certainly false to represent a just legislator like Muhammed in the light of a brutal woman-hater, as in reality he was what is called in French a *feministe* of the first order. "If ye hate women," so runs a passage of the Koran, "it may happen that ye may hate a thing wherein God placed much good."² In another passage it says, "respect women who have borne you."³ As regards the treatment of wives the Koran draws the attention of men to the following warnings, "It is one of the signs of God's power to have given you wives to live with; He has established love and kindness between you. Verily herein are signs unto people who reflect."⁴

The above are only a few examples of the Islamic rule on the subject with which we are dealing. Are there passages in the Scriptures which would convey to the mind

1. Genesis III. 16.

2. Koran IV. 23. 3. *Ib.* IV. 1. 4. *Ib.* XXX. 20.

ON THE POSITION OF MUSLIM WOMEN. 99

a greater sense of justice and humanity to be shown towards the gentler sex than those of the Koran? We have not ourselves been able to discover them, and unless Christian writers (who boast to the world that the Christian Church is the only one which has secured to women a just position) can point them out to us we cannot but conclude that they are as untrustworthy in their proud boast as they are mistaken in attributing to Islam the degradation of women. Boastful phraseology may convince the fool, but people of common-sense require evidence, and unless Christian authors can give us authenticated proofs that the present ameliorated position of women in the more advanced parts of Christendom is due to the influence of Christianity, no Mussulman will treat their arguments with seriousness. Islamism has indeed ordered women to obey their husbands, but it does not require from them a servile subjection to their lords and masters. It is the Bible, and not the Koran, which requires women to submit themselves unto their "husbands as unto the Lord." Moreover, this submission appears to us to be unconditional.

Here is what the Bible says on this point : “Let the wives be subject to their own husbands *in everything*”¹ Man is highly spoken of in the Scriptures as “the glory of God,” and woman is said to be created for his sake.² Why man, that commonplace creature, should particularly deserve this mark of divine favour, no Biblical commentator can explain to us intelligibly.

This injunction to submissiveness has been explained as an “exhortation to love.” It is an odd interpretation ! Human nature is perhaps not the same everywhere, and a Christian woman may possibly love a man on mere exhortation. But to their bitter grief Mussulmans have long since discovered that neither exhortation nor gentle inducement, nor even the most earnest pleading is of any avail in softening the hearts of their women if the latter do not really care for their society.

Women whose situation is debased and who are reduced to the state of domestic slavery could not very well have the rights of possessing property. Mussulman women have the full right of possessing property and they can, if they find it necessary, manage their own

1. Eph. v. 24.

2. I Corinthians, xl 7—9.

ON THE POSITION OF MUSLIM WOMEN. 101

property quite independently of the interference of their husbands. The rights of ownership were secured to them some thirteen hundred years ago by a just legislator and not by the act of any parliament in recent years. We need not here give legal authorities—the names alone would form a tedious list—but we will only refer to the fourth chapter of the Koran, where many just and liberal rules are set forth for the benefit of women. In civilized Europe, the excellent ways and just rules of which are constantly upheld to the East, the rights of women did not begin to meet with really considerate treatment until the nineteenth century. In his work on the "Subjection of Women" J. S. Mill gives us some idea what was the position of Englishwomen in this respect up to quite recent times. Are the improvements which have been made in the advanced countries of Europe in respect of the rights and position of women at the present day so perfect as to inspire envy among the women of non-Christian communities? We put this question to those champions of Christian civilization who seem to find a peculiar pleasure in calling attention to the appalling situation of women under the Muslim

rule. It would, in our opinion, be an act of preposterous boldness to answer this query with a "yes." Without making any elaborate enquiries into the matter we could get a correct idea of the legal status of women of the civilized West if we glanced at the proceedings and resolutions of the congresses and societies which meet from time to time in Europe to discuss women's affairs ; and we could thus learn what measures of justice Christian women still need. The very existence of these congresses and societies presents us with practical proof of the fact that the Utopia for women has not yet been reached, as the chivalrous advocates of Christian civilization would have us believe.

That under the degrading influence of Islam women are subjected to insufferable bondage by men seems to have the force of a foregone conclusion. A kind-hearted Christian would therefore very likely express pity for the wretched condition of these poor creatures, and wonder why Christian millionaires did not open their purses and pour their gold into the ever-ready-to-be-filled chests of missionary societies, so that the spread of the Christian sense of humanity and chivalry might be more effectively facilitated in the

ON THE POSITION OF MUSLIM WOMEN. 103

thraldom of Islam. Were we sure that our word would have any weight with such a kind-hearted Christian we should advise him not to allow his sense of tender mercy to overrule his sense of logic, and we should ask him to find out first whether the work of Christianization is really wanted by the very women for whom his heart feels pity. Let him travel through Muslim countries from one end to another, and he might come across as many women suffering from the brutal tyranny of their husbands as men whose vicious wives made life quite unbearable for them. But these are isolated occurrences, and as a matter of fact they are not peculiar to the East. Hardly a single woman could be found to complain that the laws of Islam made her the slave of her husband.

In speaking of the rights of Mussulman women we have stated that they can manage and use in whatever way they like the money and property which belong to them, without requiring the consent of their "lords and masters." It is of course considered proper that husband and wife should shrink from no material sacrifice for each other's sake. Sentimental considerations of this kind are perfectly well known to the Muslim people;

and yet from the earliest time of their history they have considered that, although by the sacred tie of marriage a united couple is "no longer twain but one flesh," they should nevertheless keep their own purses separate. The early legislators of Islam were aware of the baser side of human nature. They were afraid that so great a strain on the mutual unselfishness between a couple might lead to a rupture and that incompatibility of temperament might drive them to such a pass as to gnash their teeth against one another in a divorce court. "What sayest thou, O woman?" said a Christian saint; "why, thou hast no longer a body of thine own, and hast thou money of thine own?"¹ Sublime as these ideas seem to sound to the advocates of the Christian ideas, the moral they teach does not appear to us of much practical value.

It must be admitted that distinct disabilities are imposed by the law of Islam on women in judicial matters. A woman's evidence is not valid in cases of crime; indeed, (excepting in places where men cannot have access, such as the baths,) the evidence of two women, even when in agreement, is not accepted in

1. St. John Chrysostom on St. Paul's Epistles.
Homily xx.

a matter of judicial importance, unless supported by a male witness. This is an ancient rule of the Islamic law; if we follow the researches of modern writers on the psychology of the sexes we may find the reason. The excessive impressibility of women by outward suggestion is responsible for most of the false notions they form; the circumstances of their lives are less hardening, therefore they are more impressed than men by suggestive phenomena. At times all men tell lies; indeed, some of them with unblushing boldness. But women have a more habitual inclination to veil the facts of a case. Having been subject to the stern tutelage of the stronger sex in the long ages of the past, no wonder women cultivate the habit of substituting fiction for fact in self-defence. This tendency of females is stimulated by other elements: the desire of being useful or courted, the duty of concealing unpleasant occurrences from the notice of children and the refined instinct which constrains them to represent the periodical indisposition as one of the ailments common to both sexes, all account for the feminine habit of not always speaking the truth. The ancient legislators of Islam were therefore right in denying to women

the same degree of reliability in making depositions.

On her marriage a Muslim woman has the right of demanding two separate settlements. A sum of money must be paid by the bridegroom immediately after the conclusion of the marriage contract; another settlement, the amount of which is generally larger than the first, is received by her in the event of her husband seeking separation or in case of his death. In the latter case the wife gets her settlement apart from the share in the inheritance. It is one of the conjugal prerogatives of the husband that the wife shall not go to any place for the purpose of, let us say, spending a few days without his consent. Now if a husband tries to find an excuse for delaying the payment of the immediate settlement he cannot exercise this prerogative, and she can go to her relations and stay with them as long as she thinks necessary to make the husband reconsider his behaviour. But if he discharges all his obligations faithfully he can if necessary prevent her from staying with her own people more than one night a week and with her

ON THE POSITION OF MUSLIM WOMEN 107

friends more than once a year for a few days.¹ She can under no circumstances go to the country every now and then and enjoy herself for several days with friends, as some young married women do in civilized countries.

We should like to cite some more instances to show how far the rights and position of women under the sway of Islam are respected. But, whatever facts we might cite would probably not satisfy Islam's critics in Christendom; and they might say that in spite of all these fine stipulations Muslim women are not emancipated and that under the laws of Islam they are subject to the tyranny of men. For people of this turn of mind the ways of civilized Europe are the best possible, and therefore they contend that they should be introduced into the Muslim East. This is an absurd notion. With a very few exceptions, the ways of Western Europe as regards the treatment of women are not applicable, nor are they altogether acceptable to the people of the Mussulman Orient.

1. The regulations mentioned above are not of modern origin; they were set down many centuries ago and are mentioned in Muslim law books. We take the above instance from a text-book compiled in Constantinople under the title of *Messa-il-un-nikah*, i.e., legal questions concerning matrimony.

Give the much-boasted liberty enjoyed by the women of an over-civilized country in Europe to the women in the East; what would be the result? Let us illustrate what would happen in the following manner:

Let us suppose the case of a married couple, natives of an Oriental country where the civilizing mission of one or other of the great Christian Powers is working wonders. This supposed couple are quite Europeanised, they have even adopted European names, Mary, as the wife is now called, says, "Good-bye, George"; and the husband, who has assumed the name of George after becoming civilized, dropping his original name which was Muhammed, says, "Good-bye, darling." Then off goes Mary to stay a little while with friends who live a couple of hundred miles away in the country. They are intimate friends, and indeed Mary knew them long before she married George. George, being a man of the world, does not worry himself with groundless suspicions; he knows perfectly well that his wife is a sensible woman, and that she can take excellent care of herself wherever she may go. It is probable that in the country Mary will get one or two invitations to dances where she will dance with nice young fellows whom she may meet again at dinners or at bridge parties. Some of these young men are very entertaining, but George would never imagine that there could be any harm whatever in Mary's striking up an acquaintance with such gentlemen.

ON THE POSITION OF MUSLIM WOMEN. 109

Although our civilized couple are living in a temperate Eastern climate the young wife feels rather run down in the winter and so she expresses a wish to go to the Riviera in company with a lady friend. The change of air and surroundings will do Mary a great deal of good, and so the gallant George sends her to the Riviera. He would not dream of saying to her, "Oh, no, my dear, I cannot allow you to do that," such high-handed and ungentlemanly conduct is not tolerated, since a civilized Power has introduced into their country freedom and justice. The Riviera is swarming with fashionable and interesting people from all parts of civilized Europe, and Mary meets young and bright diplomatists and officers, the kind of gentlemen one could with confidence trust his wife and daughter with. Mary writes to her husband regularly telling him about all the doings of other people and about some of her own doings. When the season is over, Mary returns home in full health and with rosy cheeks which George kisses affectionately. He asks Mary many questions but none which would in the slightest degree betray a lack of trust in the discretion of his sensible wife, for he is too much of a gentleman to disturb the happiness of his family by any vulgar suspicions.

Now our imaginary George and Mary may have their own up-to-date ways, but people in the Mussulman world would regard their ways with misgiving. You might bring forward every possible argument to prove that

there is no more harm in giving women such freedom as the above than there is in the Oriental method of exercising greater authority over the actions of the female sex, yet you would not be able to induce them to see that your ways are virtuous and theirs are barbarous.

The Mussulman law, or rather a very strictly adhered to Mussulman custom, compels a girl to cover herself with veil and cloak from the time of approaching the age of womanhood. Nowhere in the Muslim East can a woman be allowed to appear in public dressed in the same fashion as Christian women. This rule is not seldom construed by Europeans as the refusal of a legitimate liberty to the female sex. We propose to examine here whether such rules of seclusion are established with a view to denying freedom to women.

The artist impresses us as representing historic facts more faithfully than many Christian writers of fame. We observe that he paints the Virgin Mary with a veil hanging from her head and falling about her body. And then we glance at the Bible and learn

ON THE POSITION OF MUSLIM WOMEN. 111

that any Christian woman who "prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head."¹ The head-gear of the Christian lady should not, we venture to suppose, be anything essentially different from the outer-garment which the Koran advises the Muslim women to put on when they go out of their houses.² The conclusion which we can draw from references to the subject in Scripture is that the total omission of the veil is not essentially a Christian but a pagan custom; while, on the other hand, the concealing of the figure of a woman completely from the sight of strangers is not really what the Koran stipulated for, but is a natural outcome of man's jealousy. The different circumstances existing among the different communities of mankind must have necessitated the adoption of one form rather than another, and each form has the force of time-honoured custom among the people by whom it is adhered to. One party may find many shortcomings in the customs followed by the other, but we are in a position to assure our Christian readers that no Mussulman of common-sense would ever wish to see European women veiled. Why, then, for

1. 1 Corinthians xi. 5.

2. Koran XXXIII. 59.

112 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS

heaven's sake, do a countless number of writers and preachers in Christendom incessantly assail the Mussulman customs ? What reason have they for assuming that their ways are the best ? Have they any direct and explicit message from God charging them with the duty of mending the ways of the non-Christian world ?

It should be stated here that concealing the figure of a woman is not solely a device for keeping her within the bounds of chastity ; it goes without saying that a woman who is indifferent to her reputation could scarcely be kept chaste even if wrapped up in the thickest of veils. On the contrary it is a measure adopted more particularly with a view to protecting her against the unrighteous persecution of men who would use the opportunity of easier access to women's company for the purpose of seduction. Bearing these considerations in mind, it is not correct to suppose that veiling is a measure resorted to with the idea of suppressing the right of liberty of women.

There is no justification for defending a rule which is essentially wrong, and we should be ill-advised to minimise the evil effects of some forms of restriction which are unreason-

ably placed upon the freedom of women in some large Eastern towns. These restrictions affect the women of well-to-do classes, and hinder them from being more useful to their communities and to humanity at large. There will, however, come a time when the status of secluded women will be reconsidered and a wiser extension of women's liberty of action may be made in accordance with the true spirit of the Islamic law. Already there are indications of a change for the better in the position of women in the more progressive parts of the Mussulman East.

Be this as it may, whatever changes in this direction may be made, there is one point upon which the more thoughtful among the Mussulman people agree, and that is, that the freedom enjoyed by the women of Western Europe should not be copied in its entirety. This is not because these people live in a state of delusion, and see the work of the Evil One in that freedom, but because they quite naturally prefer to have a freedom compatible with their own mode of life, and they, moreover, know that indiscriminate imitation is often attended with harmful consequences. The gist of the objection in question will perhaps be better understood if we here give

an illustration. Let us take dancing as an instance.

A pious European, who was trying to introduce European civilization into an Eastern town, once took a Muslim acquaintance round his school and, pointing out to him the little girls under his charge, said, "You see how nicely these dear little ones work ; they even learn dancing and they dance with uncommon grace." But the apostle of Christian civilization seemed anxious about the future of the girls, who would inevitably marry men unacquainted with the civilized habits of Christendom. We could hardly sympathise with that gentleman's anxiety, knowing well that such social customs as dancing are not needed by Muslims.

We do not mean to show ourselves fanatics in our disparagement of dancing, which is an innocent pleasure, and indeed we learn that the dance in its rudimentary form is derived from a physiological necessity ; it is a nervous impulse due to the lively emotions ; it is a demonstration of joyful excitement which is not peculiar to the adult, since the desire to dance is impulsively and naturally manifested by the child. The history of the growth of the passion for dancing among human races is

ON THE POSITION OF MUSLIM WOMEN. 115

perhaps as old as the formation of human society. Among primitive men dancing was practised even as a devotional rite,¹ and if this was done in the worship of the gods in ancient times, it is also practised by civilized men in our own times by way of showing adoration to their goddesses. Why, if it were not for the sake of their goddesses, as we may call those beautiful women who are often to be seen at dances, would any man of common-sense go to a stuffy ball-room, and turn round and round the whole night, inhaling meanwhile a most vitiated atmosphere? We can find no other reason. For the ecstatic craze of women for dancing there are perhaps sounder reasons, and as one of these reasons a writer points out that the dance "enables them to give harmonious and legitimate emotional expression to the neuro-muscular irritability which might otherwise escape in more explosive forms."²

Yes, as we have just shown, the dance must be a physiological necessity felt by human beings. It may be surmised that this physiological necessity is of divine origin,

1. See *Les Religions des Peuples non-civilisés*, p. 267.
A. Réville.

2. Havelock Ellis, *Man and Woman*, p. 355.

as when the music “pipes unto you” you manifest by the movements of your body a heavenly joy which frees you from all the sorrows of this world. There is “a time to mourn and a time to dance,” says a passage of Scripture,¹ and in the moment of such joyful abandon it is incumbent upon you to express your gratitude, saying “O Lord, Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing,”²

Now, a delightful amusement such as dancing, which from time immemorial has been enjoyed by human beings and which is spoken of so favourably in the Scriptures, could not be depreciated by Mussulmans. What they really object to is the mode of dancing which is in vogue in over-civilized Christendom. No Muslim father or husband, however up-to-date he may be in his ways, and however broad may be the views he may hold about things Christian, would ever consent to his wife or daughter dancing with a man. It is utterly useless to try to make him understand that this pleasure is absolutely innocent, that the dancers are people of refinement who are accustomed to mixed dancing

1. Ecclesiastes III. 4.

2. Ps. XXX. 11.

from their infancy, and that in ninety-nine out of a hundred cases the meeting of young men and women does not result in any consequences detrimental to morality, on the contrary it occasionally leads to happy union in marriage. "No," he will say, "a young man whose soul is just stirred up by champagne or any such devil's brew, will come across my wife or daughter, and with his arm tightly encircling her waist, bringing her bare neck nearer to his wicked eyes, whirl about the ballroom until the moment when they retire to a corner to have a *tête-à-tête*." "No," he will say with greater emphasis, "fire and gunpowder should be kept apart."

But what about the chaperon?

"Pooh, chaperon! You think she can always keep a sharp look-out on the movements of young people. When necessity arises she can easily be made a negligible quantity, and kisses can be stolen under her very nose. As a matter of fact some chaperons, more prudent than others, save the dignity and responsibility of their position by gracefully conniving at the irregular conduct of young women under their guidance. In some of the more advanced countries of Christendom, many young women are reported to carry

their right of freedom so far as to dispense with the services of a chaperon altogether. They are known to be escorted home at night by their favourite partner, and they carry with them the latch-key of their houses. If this is the case, we should never care to adopt such customs of Christendom, and as the acceptance of your civilized ways, unlike your civilized rule, is urged upon us more or less pacifically, we shall be able to resist their introduction into the East."

From the rule of seclusion various disabilities for Muslim women are supposed to result, and the fact that young women have no voice in the choice of their own husbands is considered to be the most serious and unjust of these disabilities. Indeed, girls cannot always follow their natural inclinations in giving themselves up to their life-companions. This is not, however, always the case ; and their misfortune appears to be somewhat grossly exaggerated. But what shall we say of similar cases frequently occurring under different circumstances in the countries of those who criticise Mussulman ways ? It is not the desire of the girl's heart,

but money, that often plays the greatest part in her marriage in some civilized countries of Western Europe. Mothers with pretty daughters make tremendous efforts to catch husbands whose handsome purses seem to outweigh their natural and moral disqualifications. Let us hear the opinion of a well-known European writer on a mother of this, by no means uncommon, type.

"She may be a model of extreme morality, and yet perhaps she introduces some wealthy man to her daughter and tries to overcome her natural indifference to him by judicious persuasion and advice somewhat after this fashion: that it would be very foolish to throw away such a chance of a comfortable provision for the future, that it would be in the highest degree imprudent to wait a second opportunity which might never arrive, that a maiden ought to think of practical things and get all the silly rubbish of romantic love-stories out of her head. This model mother is an infamous go-between, no more and no less than the old hag who whispers corrupt counsel into the ear of some poor work-girl."¹

It is of the absence of girls' choice in their marriages in Western Europe and not

1. Max Nordau, *Conventional Lies of our Civilization*, p. 266.

of the dictated matrimony of Mussulman women that a French medical writer says, that "the social institutions do not afford any adequate guarantee for a young girl against the ambition of avaricious and conventional parents who make her pass the spring of her life in the arms of a hideous husband." After examining the danger to which the health of women is not rarely exposed by their ill-suited marriages the same authority makes the following remark. "*Il nous semble que, du moment où l'homme n'est plus habile à l'acte de la reproduction, la sainte institution du mariage est profanée.*"¹ If there remains anything for us to say on the subject it is only to remind Christian critics of the Islamic institutions of the existence of a Biblical passage of which they often display a very strange forgetfulness: "*Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?*"

1. Dr. Caufeynon, *Histoire de la Femme*, pp. 95-96.

CHAPTER VIII.

POLYGAMY AND DIVORCE.

The practice of polygamy is a legacy from time immemorial ; reasons why it could not be suppressed : to check superfluous number of husbandless women from dissolute acts and to prevent the increase of illegitimate and disinherited offspring—Christian society is not altogether free from the polygamic habit ; comparison between plurality of wives and mistress-keeping ; There were polygamists in the bosom of the Church—An English scholar maintains that conjugal unity is not understood by Mussulmans—Church's leniency in the divorce and re-marriage of powerful princes—Islam did not deny to women the right of divorce, but it put men in a more advantageous position in this respect ; Divorces do not occur in Muslim countries more frequently than in Christendom.

“ THAT the abominable practice of polygamy should be condemned in Christendom with the vehemence it deserves ; that Christian society is free from the stains of this debasing form of sensuality ; that the Christian Church throughout many centuries has been endeavouring to save a large portion of humanity from the influence of this moral degradation ; and that it is Islam, the religion of lust, which

favours the institution of polygamy":—Thus may be summarized what we presume to be the opinion of Christian writers and preachers who criticise polygamy in Islam. In this chapter we shall examine how far this opinion is accurate.

The indulgence in polygamy which Muhammed permitted was not, as Thomas Carlyle once pointed out, "of his appointment. He found it practised, unquestioned, from immemorial time in Arabia. What he did was to restrict it."¹ The early Church is known to have allowed various pagan customs to be introduced into the Christian rites. The object was to reconcile the converts with the new order of things which the propagation of Christianity necessitated. A wise man such as the Prophet of Arabia could not be expected to alienate the people whose adherence to the new faith he invited, by making a wholesale revolution in the long-established customs of their society. But although the Prophet had the reconciliation of the Arabs at heart, he nevertheless curtailed and reformed as much as he could, such of their ways as appeared to him grossly barbarous. With a view to restricting the

1. Thomas Carlyle: *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, ch. II.

custom of plurality of wives the Koran stipulates that "if ye fear ye cannot act equitably towards two, three or four wives, *marry only one.*"¹

As among many ancient races plurality of wives was considered a quite natural thing for a man, so a restricted form of polygamy was not thought by Arabs to be detrimental to the morals of society and the welfare and peace of a family at the time when Islam began to make its appearance. After the establishment of Islam, on the other hand, a modified form of polygamy was found to be of service in checking the advance of prostitution. As history tells us, pagan Arabs, prompted by some savage superstition, used to bury alive some of their female issue; Islam put an end to this cruel custom. The suppression of this infanticide, coupled with the decrease in the number of males caused by the interminable warfare between pagan and Islamized Arabs, brought about a wide inequality between the number of both sexes, and many women could find no husbands. The desire to be married is perhaps the prime aim in every woman's life, and this was

1. Koran, chapter IV. 3.

certainly the case in the ages when the existence of females was not regarded as of much use for any other purpose than that of becoming mothers. If Muhammed had accepted the doctrine of the Christian Church as regards marriage and if every one of his followers had had to limit himself to the company of a single wife, the result of this system in the case of that large number of women who were less fortunate in finding husbands, would have been that they would be driven into a state of total idleness. Muhammed, who was, of all prophets and legislators, the most deadly hater of adultery and prostitution, knew what would come out of this idleness. Thus he had the utmost justification for permitting polygamy but, as we have just seen, he restricted it carefully.¹

The Koran warns its followers that if they fear that they cannot be just towards more than one wife they must marry only one. The conditions laid down for the practice of polygamy are so difficult of fulfilment that only a small number of men, and those brave ones,

1. In his essay on polygamy David Hume says "The Republic of Athens having lost many of its citizens by war allowed every man to marry two women in order the sooner to repair the waste which had been made by this calamity."

can fearlessly enter upon it. In our days the maintenance of even a single wife is so arduous a task that very many men incline to dispense with the delights of married life altogether. From these considerations as well as from the absence of the *raison d'être* of the olden days just mentioned, polygamists are to be very rarely met with in the Muslim East.

There is another justification for the permission of polygamy which should be dealt with separately; this is the consideration of the rights of a man's illegitimate issue. A Mussulman can best save himself from the disgrace of public opprobrium and from the reproach of the law by marrying the mother of a child whom his indiscretion has brought into the world, no matter whether he has already a wife at home or not. "Fear God and treat your offspring justly," said Muhammed. Therefore a man should not disavow or disinherit his issue. No theory about natural children is recognised, and no *maisons d'accouchements* or baby-farms are known in Mussulman towns to enable the father of an illegitimate child to avoid the unpleasant acknowledgment of his own issue. In civilized

Christendom a man may possibly silence a girl on whom he has brought cruel trouble by allowing his victim some money either of his own free-will or on account of the threatening letters he might otherwise receive from her. But in a Mussulman community a man cannot so easily avoid the responsibility of his sensual conduct. The humble station of his seduced victim is not sufficient excuse for refraining from marrying her and thus making his child legitimate. He did not consider the humble position of the woman inconsistent with his dignity when he was earnestly entreating her to believe in the sincerity of his seductive words. In the democratic society of Islam, where sovereigns not rarely marry women raised from humble stations of life, and where high-born girls are often given in marriage to men who, although they may possess distinguished qualities, have no princely claims, not much heed would be paid to the aristocratic pretensions of a class of mere mortals.

Within only the last few years, we have noticed in European journals several cases of helpless young women condemned to death by the law, because under the compulsion of an insufferable shame they killed their

illegitimate infants. Some girls under the same circumstances have committed suicide. Again it has come under the notice of some of us that women sometimes waste the spring-time of their youth in hard work, because they have to maintain not only themselves but also their babes, whom they have entrusted to baby farmers under the seal of secrecy and whom, strangely enough, they love as deeply as they hate the men responsible for their ruin. Investigate such cases and you will very likely find that the majority of the culprits are men of position. Nothing can constrain them to marry their poor victims if they are already married, because this would constitute bigamy. But how about those who are not married? One would wish that the civilized society of Christendom would remedy such evils in its midst before attacking Mussulmān institutions such as polygamy.

We now enter on interesting but thorny ground; namely, we propose to examine whether Christian society is free from a practice as bad as, if not worse than, polygamy; and whether the record of Christendom, and indeed of the Christian Church, can be pro-

nounced clean as regards the exercise of polygamy itself. The natural desire of men for something new and fresh is well-known, and it is also no less known that in Christendom a considerable number of married men, desirous of finding fresh pleasures and new companions in life, possess unofficial wives, that is to say, mistresses. In the case of such gentlemen, two women are practically degraded. One of these is his lawful wife, for a blessing on whose wedding so much ceremonial fuss has been made and so much money spent. A man who, unmindful of the weight of his moral obligations towards his lawfully wedded wife, privately attaches himself to a mistress, offers the former a gross insult, nothing more nor less. On the other hand, he is also responsible for the debasement of the woman he keeps, as, if it were not for the support which he has undertaken to give her, that woman would probably not incur the contempt with which she is inevitably regarded by those who come to know of her real situation. The position of such a woman becomes very precarious when she begins to get older, and she is ultimately thrown into the background. Her condition is still more lamentable if she is unfortunate

enough to become the mother of an illegitimate child. It may easily be imagined what an amount of worry that degraded woman has to endure for long years during which she has to pass herself off as a genuinely married person, thus striving to escape scorn and insult.

Anyone who knows something of the inner life of mankind both in the East and the West will not doubt us when we say that the number of Christian married men who keep mistresses is not smaller than the number of Mussulmans who are polygamists. To decide which of these two methods is more injurious to individual and public morality depends perhaps on the different standard of decency accepted by each party. A governor of a certain British possession in the East is stated to have once threatened with dismissal a subordinate official, an Englishman by the way, if he carried out his intention of marrying a second wife by embracing Islam. This official received the hint that his conduct would be more excusable if he kept a mistress instead. This incident illustrates clearly the difference in the standards of morality upheld by Christians and Mussulmans. The latter would scarcely trouble themselves to condemn

the standpoint taken in Christendom on the subject if *only* the former did not give them constant provocation.

There is one more word to be said as to the reason why polygamy is permitted. In conjugal union the preservation of the human species is, it is scarcely necessary to remark, of prime importance. There is also another important object of this lawful union to which pious moralists would not allow even the obscurest allusion. The prompting of a man's nature requires satisfaction, and the wife by reason of the nature of her sex is sometimes unable to afford that satisfaction. He must avoid committing any improper act, because such conduct, apart from being adultery, is attended with fearful risks. If he has been brought up as a Mussulman, *union libre* with a mistress, as practised by some married men in Christian countries, would not appear to him fitting; such conduct is more detrimental to the recognised rules of public morality than any form of polygamy, being liable to come to public notice, although resorted to in secret. Should a husband then be advised to overcome the temptation?

Strength of will, which is so imperative in overcoming the temptation of nature, is a gift not enjoyed by many men, and therefore in the Mussulman East the permission to have another wife is, under the circumstances, regarded as a means for avoiding falling into sinful excesses. Christians must be more highly favoured as regards this virtuous will-power just referred to, as throughout their history they have shown a remarkable strength of will in overcoming the immoderate desires of the flesh. Gibbon tells us that there were, among the early Christians, "a great number of persons of either sex who had devoted themselves to the profession of perpetual chastity Virgins permitted priests to share their bed, and gloried amidst the flames in their unsullied purity It was their unanimous sentiment that a first marriage was adequate to all purposes of nature and society. The practice of second nuptials was branded with the name of legal adultery."¹ From a reference to the Bible we conclude that in order to suppress the licentious desires of the flesh some virtuous people must have

1. *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. II., p. 110—111.

gone so far as to make “themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of Heaven’s sake.”¹ It must be from their lack of the same virtue that Mussulmans, at no time of their history, have been able to display so much resistance against nature’s inclinations, and they have always been afraid of nature avenging itself.

That monogamy is theoretically nobler than any other kind of matrimony is a view which could hardly be disputed. But to attribute this noble form of nuptial union to the influence of Christianity alone is to show a gross ignorance of the marriage customs existing among Christian and non-Christian races of mankind in general. Monogamy as well as polygamy was practised in pre-Christian times in different parts of the world. Among the early Christians there are known to have been many polygamists. Even in the bosom of the Church there must have been persons with more than one wife, for St. Paul says, “A Bishop must be the husband of one wife.”² What does this mean? It must mean something, therefore many equivocal explanations have been given to this Biblical passage by various commentators. Calvin dismissed some of these expositions

1. St. Matthew, xix. 12.

2. 1 Timothy, iii. 2.

as a sort of childish fancy. But his own views can hardly satisfy a Mussulman who wishes to understand the true spirit of the above passage. In attacking the celibacy of the priests from whose doctrine he dissented he says, "I do not disapprove of the opinion of those who think that the Holy Spirit intended to guard against the diabolical superstition which afterwards arose."

We cannot help admiring the genius of ecclesiastical writers in forming conjectures; nobody else seems to be so gifted in understanding the mystical meaning of biblical phraseology as a theologian. Thus, in explaining the meaning that "a Bishop must be the husband of one wife," they may tell us that St. Paul did not mean to address only Bishops, as in guiding the people in the paths of righteousness they ought to be models of virtue, and any sinful conduct which is prohibited to them could not be allowed in the case of others. Although we cannot pretend to be acquainted with the profession of a theologian we beg pardon for venturing to make one or two remarks here

1. John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, English Translation.

on the meaning of the above passage : “*A Bishop must be the husband of one wife,*” because as men of simple and modest life Bishops should not indulge in the luxury of having two or three wives which is ruinously expensive, and Bishops in the time of St. Paul had no fat salaries with which to feed them or palaces in which to accommodate them. “*A Bishop must be the husband of one wife,*” because having such arduous duties to discharge towards his church and his people, the worries of a single wife were quite enough for him, and the intolerable burden of many wives would hamper him very seriously in carrying out his duties.

The monogamy existing among the Christian communities is more conventional than religious ; it does not prevent the same evil effects on morality which the Mussulman polygamy is thought to produce. There were polygamists among the fathers of the early Christian Church and there have always been Christians who have advocated the recognition of a partial polygamy under exceptional circumstances in particular places. There have been Christian missionaries who, with the desire of

getting more converts from among the heathen than their Muslim rivals, would go so far as to allow their new recruits to continue their polygamic customs.¹ They thought that it was impolitic to interfere with those social relations of the heathen in which the Gospel found them, and did not try to prevent them from enjoying the cheerful company of their several wives so long as they embraced Christianity. No, there is no harm in allowing these people to have their own ways. The Old Testament clearly justifies the plurality of wives. Christianity accepted as a starting-point the Old Testament, which is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and did not Jesus Christ say, "Think not that I am come to destroy, but to fulfil"?

It is indeed superbly poetic to contemplate the state of monogamy where two refined and intellectual beings unite their lives under a feeling of devotion and sympathy. But, if we only open our eyes, as a French writer puts it, "we perceive that, in the present day, in countries reputed to be the most civilized, and even in the classes reputed to be the most distinguished, the majority of

1. See *L'Islam et le Christianisme dans l'Afrique Centrale*, pp. 92-8. D. A. Forgeret, Paris.

136 THE CRESCENT VERSUS THE CROSS.

individuals have polygamic instincts which they find it difficult to resist.”¹ Another European writer describes this awkward truth in the following picturesque manner :

“ Man lives in a state of polygamy in the civilized countries in spite of the monogamy enforced by law ; out of a hundred thousand men there would barely be one who could swear upon his death-bed that he had never known but one single woman during his whole life.”²

* * *

Any subject dealing with the problem of matrimony must needs have some bearing upon the possibility of divorce, and it is no doubt with this consideration in mind that Voltaire once said, “ divorce is perhaps of the same date as marriage ; I think, however, that marriage is a few weeks older than divorce.” Bearing this truism in mind we now turn our attention to the discussion of some aspects of divorce in Islam which are

1. Ch. Letourneau, *The Evolution of Marriage*, p. 136. The Contemporary Science Series, London.

2. Max Nordau, *Conventional Lies of our Civilization*, p. 301.

often treated by self-appointed reformers of the world in Christendom with the same unreasonable harshness as polygamy.

"The idea of conjugal unity is utterly unknown to Muhammedans excepting when the Christian example is by chance followed, and even there the continuance of the bond is purely dependent on the will of the husband."¹ Thus writes one of those European Orientalists who, while assuming the duty of instructing Western readers on Eastern matters, exhibit more missionary zeal than scholarly research. This opinion is of course largely shared in Christendom. But what is that "Christian example of the conjugal bond" which is followed by some Mussulmans who, otherwise, might mercilessly cast off their wives and ruin the happiness of their family circle by a momentary caprice? To be sure the Eastern world is not going to permit itself to learn the Christian example from the contemporary exponents of the Christian virtues; it must find them in the Bible itself. Here is what we read about divorce in the Scriptures: "And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife except for fornication,

1. *The Life of Muhammed*, Sir Wm. Muir.

and shall marry another, committeth adultery." As any English-speaking person of education would know better than we do, it was only in comparatively recent times that the Christian peoples began to make some improvements in their divorce regulations. The early Church ascribed to marriage a mystical meaning which can convey no sense whatever to a rational mind, and so the simple matrimonial union between man and woman was made the symbol of unity between Christ and the Church. The Christian Church almost completely abolished divorce and when she became sovereign and legislator branded the second nuptials with the name of adultery. For centuries millions of human beings have probably suffered under the indissoluble bond of unhappy marriages, and indeed in order to rid themselves of their undesirable companions in life many thousands must have committed the sin of fornication—the sole cause of divorce. In the divorces and remarriages of powerful princes whose good graces were of supreme importance to the ecclesiastical authorities, the forbidding spirit of the Scriptures as regards divorce must, however, have been leniently interpreted. Why not? By the words, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, com-

mitteth adultery," did not the Holy Spirit simply intend that the sacred tie of marriage should not be taken lightly?

Until the dawn of freedom of conscience in Western Europe such was the view of the Church as regards, what was, practically, the indissoluble character of marriage. And when the European nations began to wrest, however partially, the affairs of marriage and divorce from the domination of their ecclesiastical hierarchy, the hindrances they encountered were of a most vexatious character. Not rarely in the case of those who married without the assent of the canonic law, the children were refused baptism or declared illegitimate; and those who obtained a divorce in a manner contrary to the wishes of the Church were denied the last sacrament in the hour of death. Even in this age of enlightenment the religious element, inherited from the superstitious past, still dominates the matrimonial affairs of most Christian peoples, and a constant outcry is being raised against the defects of the existing divorce regulations. No Mussulman who learns all these things from the history of Europe would wish to "follow the Christian example," as is alleged by that scholarly

Anglo-Indian official to whom we have referred above.

On the evolution of divorce a writer whom we have already quoted makes the following remarks : "Our various remarks on the subject of divorce have led us to nearly uniform conclusions. They all show us that, however dissimilar may be the countries or the epochs, the union of man and woman begins, with rare exceptions, by the complete slavery of the latter. Then as the ages move on their course we see societies which become by degrees civilized, and in proportion to this advance the condition of the woman improves. At first the man could kill her if she displeased him ; then, the case of adultery apart, he contented himself with repudiating her, and some rights were even granted to the repudiated woman. . . At length her right to seek divorce was recognized."¹

Now if we follow the theory advanced by this sociologist we may safely say that Islam, from the very beginning, reached a

1. *The Evolution of Marriage*, p. 247.

higher degree of civilization than Christianity did, as from the time of its foundation Islam facilitated divorce under reasonable and necessary circumstances, regulated the rules governing the affairs of divorce, and granted some rights to the divorced woman. It is not correct to assert that the Islamic law absolutely denied to the woman the power of securing a divorce. At the time of the arrangement of her marriage a woman can stipulate that she will reserve for herself the right of contesting what is called "issmat," which may be rendered as "decency of conduct." Thus, when a husband begins to deviate from the path of decency and conducts himself in a fashion detrimental to the honour and peace of his family, his wife, who has the right of "issmat" in her hands, can appeal to the law, and if the law finds that her life could no longer be tolerable if she remained with him the marriage can be dissolved. It should be remarked that only educated, well-informed women know how to take advantage of this right. Christian authors who write on Islam are apt to ignore this right of women in the matter of divorce.

It must be admitted that by the law of Islam men are in a more advantageous

position for securing divorce than women. The justification of this gross inequality is simple enough, though it may appear strange to Islam's critics: it is that if women had the same advantages as men very few people could enjoy an uninterrupted married life, as certain peculiarities in the natural characteristics of the sex might lead a vast number of women to take the marriage tie quite lightly. This is an Eastern view. Whether in the advanced countries of Christendom (where the faculty of reasonableness is known to be better cultivated among women), women can preserve the sacred tie of marriage with the same whole-hearted seriousness as men is a question which should be dealt with by those who have studied the psychology of the female temperament.

In spite, however, of the greater opportunities secured to men, divorces do not occur more frequently in Mussulman countries than they do among Christian peoples; while, on the other hand, the dulness of Oriental society is rarely broken by the lively gossip which society divorce-cases, with their startling revelations and sensational evidence, so often give rise to in Western Europe.

The following quotations from the *Koran* and from the traditions of Muhammed may give an idea how Islamism treats the question of divorce:—

“The thing which is justifiable but disliked by God is divorce.” *A Tradition.*

“When ye divorce your wives either retain them with generosity, or put them away with generosity. But retain them not by constraint, so as to be unjust towards them.” *Koran.*

“When ye divorce your wives, and they have waited the prescribed time, hinder them not from marrying husbands when they have agreed among themselves in an honourable way.” *Koran.*

“Divorce in itself is an abominable and dangerous act, as it dissolves marriage, an institution which involves many circumstances of a temporal and spiritual nature.” *An early Muslim Jurist.*¹

1. The English versions of the passages quoted above are taken from the *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 86—87. Th. P. Hughes, B.D.

CHAPTER IX.

SLAVERY UNDER CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM.

The misleading translation of "Servus" exposed by Christian writers themselves; Liberation of slaves not recommended by the Scriptures—Work of Christianity and Islam in improving the condition of slaves; "Give a written instrument to the slave who wishes to free himself," says the Koran—Marriage with slaves recommended by the Koran; ecclesiastical law of Christendom considers it a crime—Black leaders in Islam who were originally slaves; Caliph who acted as camel-driver while his slave rode—Remarkable researches of a Frenchman into slavery under Christian rule—Kindlier treatment of slaves due rather to proselytising than philanthropic motives.

"That servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes."

Luke XII. 47.

"He who beats his slave without fault or slaps him on the face, his atonement for this is freeing him."

The Tradition of Muhammed.

SLAVERY UNDER CHRISTIANITY & ISLAM. 145

“Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ.” *Eph. vi. 5.*

“Feed your slaves with food which ye eat, clothe them with such clothing as ye wear, and command them not to do that which they are unable.”

The Tradition of Muhammed.

“Art thou called being a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.” *I Cor. vii. 21.*

“Alms are to be distributed only unto the poor . . . and for the redemption of the slaves.”

Koran, ix. 60.

“And unto such of your slaves as desire a written instrument allowing them to redeem themselves on paying a certain sum, write one; give them of the riches of God which He hath given you.” *Koran, xxiv. 33.*

* * *

Christianity has a remarkable capacity for adaptation. But what seems still more

1. The translation of the above traditions may be found in the *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 599.

remarkable to those who are not Christians is the ease with which ecclesiastics revise the wording of the Bible when the circumstances of the time make such revision imperative. There appears to be no danger of incurring the Divine displeasure by thus changing the meaning of any scriptural passage. But men are more critical than God. Accordingly, the convenient way in which some Biblical translators rendered the term "servus" of the Vulgate by the word "servant" has long been objected to by European writers who knew the exact significance of that Latin term. In some copies of the Bible, for the free possession of which thousands of Mussulmans are indebted to the charity of the Protestant missionaries, the word "servant" is prudently revised and turned into "bond-servant."

They are certainly at liberty to do so. We cannot allow ourselves to suppose that in the above quoted passages of the Bible the Apostles only referred to household servants and that Christianity did not approve of the institution of slavery. A careful reading of these passages discloses the fact that the word "servant" occurs distinctly in opposition to the free individual. From the comments of Calvin on the Biblical passage "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters"

SLAVERY UNDER CHRISTIANITY & ISLAM. 147

we moreover learn that St. Paul addressed himself immediately not to hired servants "but slaves whose slavery was perpetual, whom their masters bought with money, that they might impose upon them the most degrading employments and might with the full protection of the law exercise over them the power of life and death."

It is by no means rare to come across Christians who contend that the abolition of slavery is due to the influence of Christianity. It is, however, impossible to assert that the Gospel really attacks slavery as an institution. No direct or express condemnation of slavery can be found in the Bible, and not even "a single recommendation is made by the two principal interpreters of the Scriptures, Paul and Peter, to the masters to liberate their slaves."¹

Those who represent slavery to be an institution contrary to the spirit of Christianity, at the same time charge Islam with maintaining that odious legacy of antiquity. As a matter of fact, slavery has been maintained

1. Patrice Larroque, *L'Esclavage chez les Nations Chrétaines*, p. 6, Paris, 1864.

both by Christianity and Islam; it was a heritage to them from time immemorial. In describing its origin, a French authority says: "Freedom, that is our nature; work, that is our condition in life. But man, being condemned to work, revolted against its hardship, and not being able to dispense with its burden, threw it upon the shoulders of his fellow-beings, living conveniently on the fruits of the work which he assigned to others; and these inequalities coming down as a heritage to their posterity, there have been masters and slaves from the beginning." Neither Christianity nor Islamism could suppress the institution of slavery, but it is claimed by the partisans of each that the establishment of their respective creeds brought about an improvement in the conditions of the suffering slave, tending subsequently to his emancipation. How much each of these two religious systems has contributed to the improvement of the lot of slaves, and to what extent they have advocated their enfranchisement, are questions which deserve careful consideration.

In order to examine these questions it is a prime necessity to refer to the injunctions

of the Apostles, as well as to the stipulations of the founder of Islam :—

“Art thou called being a slave? care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.” This is a counsel given by St. Paul to slaves. Christian commentators may explain this passage in a thousand ways as may be agreeable to them, but no Christian apologist can with propriety maintain that such injunctions as the above support the contention that Christianity has favoured the abolition of slavery.

“Unto such of your slaves as desire a written instrument, allowing them to redeem themselves, write one”—thus ordains the Koran. It is difficult to imagine that, in an age when a radical change in any of the deeply rooted institutions of antiquity was almost an impossibility, any injunction could secure better than this stipulation of the Koran the means of freedom to slaves.

“Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.” This is a piece of advice given by St. Peter to slaves; it forms an interesting contrast with what Muhammed once said to a slave who came to him crying for justice. The slave was bleeding profusely.

The Prophet enquired who had brought this trouble on him, when the slave said it was his own master. It so happened that his master had caught him when he was forcibly kissing one of the women of the household, and had punished him in this brutal fashion. "In the first place," said the Prophet, when dealing out justice to the slave, "you will have your freedom."

According to the Muhammedan law (and be it observed that we refer to decrees promulgated over a thousand years ago), if a master wilfully murdered his slave he was executed, and if he unjustly chastised his slave he was compelled to free him. One day an Arab chief, just converted to Islam, came to Muhammed and asked him what meritorious act he could do in order to gain Paradise. "Free a slave, if you have any; or help one who is trying to redeem himself" was the spontaneous answer of the Prophet.¹ The emancipation of slaves is not only recommended, but it is also urged upon masters with a guilty conscience. "God's reproach

1. *Er-rikku Fil-Islam*, book v., ch. ii. Ahmed Sheeek, Cairo.

2. *Er-rikku Fil-Islam*, *ibid.*, and also Hughes' *Dictionary of Islam*, p. 597.

will be upon you," so runs a passage of the Koran, "for swearing with wrongful intentions; the expiation of this shall be and to free a slave.¹

"*Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ.*" In commenting on this Biblical passage a Christian saint remarks that "slavery is nothing but a name; the mastership according to the flesh brief and temporary, for whatever is of the flesh is perishable."² To make this explanation clearer, we venture to add that when the flesh of the dreaded master has perished and his cruel soul has gone to hell, or, when the trembling slave is taken away from the clutches of the master by the Angel of death, only then is real freedom assured to him. It is not in this transitory existence, but in the eternal kingdom of heaven that the true liberty is enjoyed, and therefore suffering and humiliated slaves should for ever go on serving their masters with fear and trembling because, as St. Chrysostom explains further on, "it is the truest nobility to understand how to humble ourselves."

1. Koran, v. 91. 2. St. Chrysostom, *Homily xxii. on Eph.*

152 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS.

The reading of passages of the Bible as well as those of the Koran concerning slaves leads us to maintain that, in the former, slaves are emphatically urged to remain meekly in their servile situation ; while, in the latter, masters are warned against any inhumane treatment of their slaves, and they are continually exhorted to grant them freedom. It is perhaps for these reasons that from the beginning of the Christian era down to the eighteenth century slavery was largely practised among Christian nations with all its attendant horrors ; while, on the other hand, in the world of Islam there has never arisen any fuss about the question of slavery which, in the natural course of time, was bound to dwindle away without Quakers, or without the quasi-political agitation of any party of professional humanitarians.

Islamism did not recommend slaves to humble themselves ; on the contrary it supported their natural efforts to raise their position, and nothing could tend more to relieve them from their humble situation in life than intermarriage with free persons.

With a view to establishing a nuptial union between freemen and bond-slaves the Koran contains this recommendation : “ *Whosoever of you cannot marry women of position, let him marry a slave ; you come (“as human beings”) from one another* ”. Not only those who could not marry persons of higher standing but also many Muslim princes intermarried with slaves. The mother of one of the greatest Abbassite Caliphs, El-Ma-moun, was a dark woman, originally a slave. By the laws of Islam, when a slave becomes mother to a free man’s child, she is no longer a slave. At the time when Islam established this rule, marriage between free persons and slaves was illegal in Christendom, although a master was quite free to make an unlawful use of his female slave. “ The marriage of free men and women with slaves was very much discouraged by the civil and ecclesiastical laws of the Middle Ages,” says a Christian writer. “ Heavy penalties were annexed, and the right was even conceded to parents to kill a daughter who persisted in such an alliance. The question was submitted to the see of Rome whether a free man might put away a wife, taken from

the servile class, and take a free woman to his bed. Leo responded in the affirmative."¹

We have just stated that the mother of one of the Caliphs was a slave and dark. Slavery may vanish, but a black body cannot be washed white. As has been pointed out when dealing with the subject of proselytism, there is no colour prejudice in Islam. We may cite one or two instances to show this fact. An expedition which was sent out to the conquest of Aleppo in the first century of the Muslim era was commanded by a black chief who was formerly a slave. Again, when the Muslim commander, Amrou, had invaded Egypt, he sent a mission to Upper Egypt to negotiate with the Coptic chief, Mokawkas by name, who acted as governor of the Byzantine Empire. This mission was headed by a negro, formerly a slave, whose black appearance so horrified the Christian governor that he declined to have him as spokesman of the mission. Mokawkas wanted to deal with other members of the Muslim mission, but they refused his demand, declaring that their chief was in every respect best qualified to preside over them.

1. Thomas R. R. Cobb. *An Inquiry into the Law of Slavery*, p. 244.

It is a well-known historic fact that when Jerusalem was forced to capitulate, its Christian Patriarch, Sophronius, declared that he would only negotiate the terms of the capitulation with Caliph Omar in person. The Caliph agreed to this out of consideration for what Gibbon calls "the sanctity of the place" and in order to gratify the enemy.¹ The Caliph went to Jerusalem, taking with him only his slave. They had one camel with them, on which the master and the slave rode by turns. When entering the town it was the turn of the slave to ride, who in the sight of a vanquished enemy invited his master to mount, but the Caliph declined the offer. An ecclesiastical writer observes that the humiliation of the surrender told much on the Christian Patriarch, and he did not live long after this day.² No wonder; as such an exalted Christian could not suffer the indignity of capitulating to a Muslim chief who carried the principles of justice to such an inordinate degree as to act as camel-driver to a black slave.

The traffic in slaves which has been carried on in recent times in certain parts of Africa by some brutal Arab dealers can hardly support

1. Gibbon's *Roman Empire*, vol. vi. p. 429.

2. *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, vol. iv. p. 721.

the imputation that Islamism justifies this traffic. “Three men find in me the bitterest adversary in the day of judgment, One of them is he who earns money in the traffic of free human beings,” is a traditional saying of the Prophet. Essentially the slaves of Islam as a class consisted of captives taken in warfare. Exceptional chances were given to these war-captives to procure their redemption; for instance, any captive who proved himself to be a person of some poetical attainments was at once liberated, and as poetry was an intellectual occupation highly esteemed in Arabia, not a few captives released themselves from bondage by composing poems. Any slave who knew the art of the scribe and who had no other means of securing his manumission, if he agreed to teach ten Mussulman children the art of writing would then be liberated and allowed to return to his country.¹

Thus the injunctions of the Koran, the traditions of the Prophet and the evidences from history which we have been citing, sufficiently support our contention that Islamism has from the beginning encouraged the suppression of slavery. We have been unable

1. *Kissass-i Enbi-a*, p. 234, *ibid.*

to find sufficient evidence that Christianity has, in the earlier epochs of its history, promoted the same cause of freedom with the same emphasis. It may be argued that the birth of Islam happened considerably over six hundred years after the foundation of Christianity, during which time a greater sense of equity and compassion had developed in the human mind, so that Muhammed set down those rules which stipulate for the just treatment and the emancipation of slaves, under more advanced conditions of humanity. How far such an argument is tenable will be understood from what was the status of slaves in the more progressive countries of Christendom a little before and some time after the opening of the Mussulman era in 622 A.D. The most concise account of the state of slavery in Christendom is given by a Christian writer, M. Patrice Larroque, in a work entitled *L'Esclavage chez les Nations Chrétiennes*. We can therefore not do better than reproduce from this remarkable work the history of slavery covering that period :—

“ The third Council of Toledo (589) authorised the Bishops to sell the women who lived as concubines with ecclesiastics, and thus

158 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS.

permitted them to deal in the slave trade.”
Canon 5.

(*Collection des Conciles*, tom. xiii. Paris, 1644).

“Gregory I., who occupied the papal see from 590 to 604, wrote to the Bishop of Sardinia to proceed rigorously against those pagans who refused to embrace Christianity. This Pontiff decreed that those pagans who were free-men should only be imprisoned; as regards those who were slaves they should be flogged.”

(*Epistola* 65, lib. ix., tom. ii. Paris, 1705).

“The second Council of Séville (619) condemns a freed person to return to the state of slavery if he has attempted to employ witchcraft against a Bishop who had previously been his master.” Canon 8.

(*Collection des Conciles*, tom. xiv. Paris, 1644).

“The first council of Reims (630) prohibits the sale of Christian slaves to people other than Christians, and consequently not only permits Christians to make that purchase but also assures to them the monopoly of the transaction.” Canon 11.

(*Ibid.*, tom. xv.)

“The ninth Council of Toledo (655) ordains that the children born to ecclesiastics from women, whether they be free or slave, should be perpetual slaves of the Church of their fathers” Canon 10.

(*Ibid.*, tom. xv.)

“From the year 558 to 747 the Kings of France or *maires du palais de la première race* in giving to Monasteries and Churches large tracts of land enumerated the items of objects, among which slaves of both sexes are expressly included.

“In a charter dated the tenth year of the reign of Dagobert I., St. Eloi, the treasurer of this King, grants to the Abbey of Solignac estates which, through the ‘munificence of his most pious master he owned.’ In this grant, slaves figure along with quadrupeds.”

(*Gallia Christiana Instrumenta Ecclesiae Lemovicensis*, art. 29, tom. ii,) (

“Egbert, Archbishop of York (viiiith. century) had forbidden the Abbots to free the slaves of Monasteries, and called such a franchise impious.

“Towards the end of the eighth century

the clergy of the Saxon heptarchy of England possessed a large number of slaves. The historian, John Lingard, alleges that the Bishops in the Council of Culchut (787) agreed that on their death those slaves should be set at liberty. The acts of the Council of Culchut contain nothing of the sort, although they mention various other provisions of much less importance, such as, for example, the prohibition of cutting the tails of horses and eating their flesh."

(*Collection des conciles*, tom. xviii. Paris, 1644)

"A capitulary of Charlemagne prescribes that slaves who are for sale should be sold in the presence of witnesses of distinction, among whom Archbishops, Counts and Archdeacons are included ; history does not record that these personages declined the duty of presiding over the sale of human beings."

(*Recueil des Historiens des Gaules*, tom. v.,
Capitulaire de 779, art. 19).

What was the disposition of Christendom towards the institution of slavery prior to the foundation of Islamism and for some time

afterwards may be understood from the above testimonies of history. In the ages immediately following that period a more humane consideration of the question of slavery marks the change of attitude in Christendom as regards this inheritance of the barbarous ages. Among the dignitaries of the Christian Church a more sympathetic sentiment towards the suffering slaves began to prevail, the meritorious character of the act of liberating the slave being largely expounded by these ecclesiastical dignitaries, some among whom, indeed, went so far as to sell relics of their own Churches in order to buy and emancipate captives taken from their own people by the enemy outside.

Nevertheless no traces of such a meritorious movement can be found before the time preceding the introduction of Mussulman culture into Europe through Spain. How much Europe benefited by Mussulman institutions after the Arab invasion of Spain is known to every student of history. It need only be stated here that the introduction of the new culture had softened the mind of Europe which was still filled with the brutal prejudices of ancient times. Thus influenced by the Islamic principles with regard to the

wisdom of enfranchisement, the more thoughtful among the dignitaries of the Christian Church started a movement to promote the work of emancipation of slaves.

There was, however, a distinct difference in the elements of justice displayed by those who set the example and those who followed it. The Muslim principles did not confine considerate treatment and the benefit of enfranchisement to those slaves who turned Mussulmans. While, on the other hand, the Christian prelates carried out the charitable work of enfranchisement on the line of distinct proselytism, and therefore the movement they started in favour of slaves does not evince an entirely humanitarian character. As we shall show by authenticated instances when dealing with the agitation for the abolition of the slave-traffic, the great endeavours of the Church in the cause of slaves were not free from the motive of obtaining converts, even in a later age, when the sentiment of humanity should have predominated over considerations of religion. Anyone who has followed the anti-slavery policy of the Christian Church must necessarily come to the conclusion that the slaves who had no desire to embrace Christianity deserved no genuine

support in acquiring liberty. Montesquieu's personal observations were evidently confined to Christendom when he said that "religion gives to its professors the right of enslaving those who dissent from them in order to render its propagation easier."¹

In spite, however, of the object of proselytizing, the efforts made by the Christian Church in favour of slaves deserve to be admired. Yet for centuries afterwards these efforts made but little impression upon those Christians who found the slave traffic a most lucrative business. The traffic in slaves of European origin was gradually extinguished, but an appalling development in the trade in African slaves went on unabated, until the time when a movement to bring about the abolition of African slavery was started. It will be our purpose to examine in the following chapter to what extent the endeavours made in Christendom in favour of slaves are unselfish and humanitarian.

1. *L'Esprit des Lois*, Livre xv., Chapitre IV.

CHAPTER X.

ON THE PHILANTHROPY OF ABOLITIONISTS.

Mistaken notions of European writers as to the part played by religion in the abolition of slavery—Motives of “*amis des noirs*” not really disinterested. Anti-Christian nature of the traffic discovered by Quakers ; opinions of writers of authority on the Quaker anti-slavery agitation—Facts and figures were examined before the traffic was finally abandoned—European change of attitude towards the slave trade a psychological phenomenon in philanthropic snobbishness—The cause of abolition now becomes the cause of proselytism—Capturing new converts from among the slaves taken from Muslim masters—The position of Christianized blacks who were formerly slaves always remains inferior —Queer instances of dealing in black slaves in England.

That the foundation of Christianity did not bring about the suppression of the ancient institution of slavery is a fact which can admit of no contradiction. Whether the influence of Christianity has paved the way for the abolition of the slave-trade, which has caused such untold misery to millions of enslaved human beings, is another question, and requires to be reviewed separately.

From the earliest era of the Christian religion down to the time of the prohibition of the slave traffic some eighteen hundred years have elapsed. As we have seen in the previous chapter, during the earlier centuries of this long period no appreciable change had taken place in the status of the slave; while, nearly three hundred years have passed from the time when the trade in slaves, engaged in by some Christian nations, assumed its keenest activity down to the time when an agitation in favour of the abolition of the traffic was started. The influence of Christianity in the suppression of slavery was not therefore so miraculously effective and quick as one might be led to think from reading the contentions of Christian writers who deal with the subject. To attribute every meritorious act of humanity to the influence of one's own faith is a preposterous fraud which is committed more unscrupulously in this cultured age than in the ages of blind bigotry in the past. Those writers who take pains to convince the world that the abolition of the slave trade is due to the influence of Christian civilization may find it easy to convert many persons in Christendom to their own ideas. They can, however, scarcely hope that the whole world will form its opinion

on the question merely on their evidence, if this evidence is not supported by the testimony of history. A careful glance at the history of the development and suppression of the slave trade will make it clear that the statements of these writers as regards the cause of abolition are erroneous if not altogether fraudulent.

Let us cast a rapid glance at those pages of history which deal with trade in slaves. It was at about the beginning of the 16th century that the Portuguese prepared the way for the transport of thousands of enslaved Africans to America, and it must be admitted that Portugal has a right to feel as proud of being a Christian country as any other country in Europe.

The first English slave expedition was conducted in 1562 by John Hawkins, who is stated to have taken a very large number of blacks from Guinea to the Spanish colonies, and, as everyone knows, England has always been the Christian country *par excellence*.¹

1. From a perusal of Hakluyt's *Voyages of the Elizabethan Seamen*, it will be seen that three of John Hawkins' slave-ships bore the names of Solomon, Jesus and John the Baptist.

In 1701 France succeeded in extorting a concession from Spain by virtue of which she secured for the *Compagnie Française de Guinée* the right of transporting slaves;¹ and although France is thought to be lacking in deep Christian piety, she most certainly possesses a strong Christian sentiment, a fact which is so prominently shown to the world by her politicians and publicists whenever the scheme of absorbing the infidel Morocco is considered or whenever the extortion of more concessions from the equally infidel Turkey meets with a hitch.

In 1713 the centre for the great trade in slaves was shifted from one Christian country to another. As there was then no *entente cordiale* between France and England, Great Britain unjustly deprived the former country of the monopoly of transporting slaves to America.² In the long run Great Britain secured for her subjects the exclusive right of supplying slaves by making Spain accede to a contract which was styled *Pacto Asiento de*

1. See *Histoire Générale*, vol. vi. p. 732. Lavisse-Rambaud.

2. Fortunately for humanity, nowadays these two great Christian countries only compete for the championship of the world's freedom.

Negros. In her speech to Parliament announcing this fact "Her Majesty, Queen Anne, boasted of her success in securing to Englishmen a new market for slaves."¹

After the year 1761 a wonderful evolution in the sentiment of Christendom was observed and this phenomenon foretold a brighter prospect for the unfortunate slave. Thus in France protests against the slave trade were raised by the *Amis des Noirs*, and in England by the Quakers. We know but little about the original motives which prompted those French friends of the black slave. There may perhaps exist chroniclers who might interpret their motive by alleging that they were moved solely by the sentiment of philanthropy. As a matter of fact there are some persons in this world who are subject to a sort of fervent hysteria which appears in a form resembling philanthropy. When the minds of such persons are once influenced by some abnormal passion for doing good, their deeds are marked by the absence of coherent logic. This phenomenon is, perhaps, what a student of

1. Th. R. R. Cobb, *An Enquiry, etc.*, p. clxv.

psychology calls a "hypertrophy of sentiment accompanied by atrophy in other directions."¹ Such persons show inordinate sympathy for the sufferers in distant corners of the world while treating with unconcern the misfortunes of their fellow-creatures nearer home. An individual in this frame of mind may, for example, travel from London to a Christian village in Macedonia infected by the small-pox, merely because the Turkish officials have no sense of humanity in helping poor Christian sufferers in that village; yet this very same individual may dismiss a maid-servant at home because she has been to St. Pancras to see some friends at a time when that neighbourhood was infected with small-pox. In such a case the consideration of even the remote danger of infection would betray the selfish point in the character of our philanthropist.

The humanity of the *Amis des Noirs* does not, however, appear to be quite of this eccentric type. We must, therefore, seek some other cause for their agitation in favour of the slaves. This can easily be found when we remember how a movement of selfish origin is sometimes represented in the light of a disinterested step taken for the benefit

1. Cesare Lombroso, *The Man of Genius*, p. 351.

of humanity. The fact is that the pro-slave agitation of the *Amis des Noirs* was started not very long after the transference of the *Asiento* from France to England. As the slave traffic was no longer lucrative for France, a feeling of repugnance towards this traffic must have then begun to grow up in the consciences of some Frenchmen. Hence the philanthropic movement in favour of slaves.

In England it was the Quakers, as is well known, who originated the philanthropic movement in favour of the abolition of slavery. In all the arguments employed by Quakers against the traffic in captive negroes it is uniformly upheld that the practice of slavery is contrary to the true spirit of Christianity. By this ingenious discovery the Quakers must have made the souls of all Christians in Heaven blush, as during the eighteen hundred years of the Christian era which had then elapsed, none of these Christians had been able to establish this fact. We shall here endeavour to trace the motive which really stimulated the pious zeal of Quakers in their appeal to public sympathy to bring about the suppression of the slave traffic.

It seems somewhat curious that a people like the Quakers, who are noted for their keen business-like instincts, should have protested against a trade which has always been so remunerative ; and it is human nature not to allow one's curiosity to subside until the question which has aroused that curiosity is thoroughly investigated. It will not require elaborate skill in divining to trace the original motive which stirred up the Quakers to agitate in favour of the suppression of slavery.

"The outcry against this discreditable traffic," says a creditable authority when dealing with the subject of slavery, "was started in America, and, as the apostle of abolition in England admits, the early literature which gave to his religious sect so much zeal in combating the traffic in blacks also appeared in Pennsylvania."¹ Clarkson, that indefatigable champion of the cause of the emancipation of slaves, relates that Quakers in America "had lands without a sufficient number of labourers, and families without a sufficient number of servants, for their work. Africans were poured in to obviate these difficulties, and these were bought promiscuously by all." He moreover

1. Henry Wheaton, *Histoire des Progrès du Droit des Gens.* Vol II., p. 262, Leipzig.

gives us the following more interesting bit of information : "The American Quakers, living in a land where both commerce and slavery existed, were in the way of obtaining a number of important *facts relative to both . . .* and communicating many of these facts to those in England, who espoused the same cause, they became fellow-labourers with these in producing the event in question."¹

The event which is here referred to was of course the successful agitation started with a view to bringing about the suppression of slavery. But the result in question was produced after the facts and figures on the profit of the commerce in slaves had been thoroughly investigated and the best interests of the white Christian in the matter of the slave trade had been ascertained. The American author, Cobb, throws a supplementary light upon this point. He says, "No religious zeal, no Quixotic crusade for universal liberty, prompted the abolitionists, but a sincere self-interest, which dictated this policy as a preventive against an overflowing black population." In another page the same authority states that "the Quakers of Pennsylvania did not entirely

1. *History of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade,*
pp. 99—100.

eschew the holding of negro slaves. It is a moot question whether William Penn himself did not die a slave-holder.”¹

With these historic evidences in view there can be little ground for doubting that the impetus of the anti-slavery endeavours was above all else created by the consideration of material interests. To represent selfish measures of this nature as disinterested deeds dictated merely by the sentiment of humanity is a fiction evolved in the course of human affairs by the ingenuity of a select few, and it has almost always the appearance of a genuine philanthropy for the uncritical multitude.

In order to understand more clearly the exact motive which moved philanthropists to set on foot the movement against the slave trade, the economic side of the question should also be considered. From an economic point of view slave labour is regarded as presenting many obstacles to the progress of such a work as the cultivation of land; the masters spend large capital in acquiring slaves instead of labourers who might be more useful in the improvement of the stock of tools as well as

1. Th. R. R. Cobb, *An Enquiry, &c.*, chapters IX and X.

of the soil. "With slave labour, on the other hand, it is difficult to have recourse to the process of perfecting, which requires skilled workmen whose higher wage is an incentive to ability."¹ It was, indeed, after long consideration of the economic aspect of the slave-traffic that Great Britain consented to its suppression. It took some twenty years for the supporters of the abolition question to make her denounce the legality of the traffic, and it is stated that Parliament rejected the bill on this question seven times. Elaborate arguments were devised by the philanthropists, who had evidently no interests at stake in maintaining the dealing in slaves, against the disadvantages and the immorality of the traffic, while powerful speeches were thundered forth by those whose interests seemed to be affected by the proposed measures, to prove not only the fallacy of the sentimental outcry propagated by the anti-slavery apostles, but also to show their incapacity to discriminate between facts and mere figures as well as between fiction and reality. In short, the problem of the slave trade presented to the factionists of opposing

1. *Nouveau Dictionnaire d'Economie Politique*, vol. I.
p. 933. Paris, 1891.

views a topic of dispute as lively as the question of fiscal reform in our day.

In the days when Spain required African slaves for forced labour in her colonies, it was not only France and England, the two most civilized champions of humanity and liberty, who rivalled one another in their eagerness to meet this requirement, but the other maritime Powers of the time also struggled to have a fair share in the business. When, however, the advantages of trading in slaves turned out to be of a dubious character and kind-hearted persons began to discover its inhuman nature, it was not only in France and England, but also in other parts of civilized Christendom that a great number of people began to hear the voice of conscience protesting against this nefarious traffic. Then much compassion was shown to those wretched blacks from Africa, the victims of the insatiable avidity of the white man. Consequently, animated by this new sentiment, Denmark in 1792 forbade the buying, selling or transporting of slaves, and in 1814¹ Sweden and Holland abolished the slave trade in their dominions. A commendable example ought to

1. The above dates are taken from the *Annals of Politics and Culture*. G. P. Gooch.

be followed. Indeed, an epoch-making example is bound to be imitated by many, because the craving for what is the fashionable idea of the time is a contagious mania from which people in the more civilized regions of the world suffer most.

Up to the time when it became the fashion to compassionate those unfortunate human beings who were reduced to a state of bondage, slavery had been regarded in Christendom as a handy means of proselytizing. It was probably on account of the prevalence of this mode of thought that Montesquieu made the following remark: "I would rather say that religion bestows upon those who profess it a right to reduce to slavery those who do not follow it, in order to facilitate its propagation." The methods of spreading a religion by means of enslaving those who are called heathens, did not, for centuries, receive the condemnation it deserved. When, however, a reactionary movement in connection with the slave trade appeared in Europe under the form of philanthropy, then apologists began to explain away the comfort and benefit derived by slaves from embracing Christianity.

Clarkson said "in Barbados an Act was passed . . . to prevent Quakers from bringing their negroes into their meetings for worship. This Act was founded on the pretence that the safety of the island might be endangered if the slaves were to imbibe the religious principles of their masters . . . The poor slave, who saw nothing but misery in his temporal prospects, was deprived of the only balm which could have soothed his sorrow—the comfort of religion."¹

In the introduction to his *Histoire de l'Esclavage dans l'Antiquité*, H. Wallon says, "Let us not forget that these slaves have been converted to our consoling religion."² Of course Christian ingenuity is not easily at fault when changed circumstances necessitate an excuse for a principle which is not essentially irreproachable. But the apology is pre-eminently odd. Deprive the helpless blacks of the company of those who are near and dear to them, of their homesteads and their natural surroundings, and drive them as flocks of cattle are driven to the slaughter-house; then, the only consolation offered to these down-trodden creatures is the religion

1. *History of the Abolition, &c.*, pp. 100—101.

2. p. xxxvi.

of the white man. A very soothing compensation indeed, if it could only be rightly appreciated.

No sooner had the prohibition of the slave trade become an established fact than the pious humanitarians of Christendom began to adopt a new policy of evangelizing which consisted in advocating the necessity of the emancipation of slaves still existing in Muslim countries. This was a shrewd move, as it would not only enable the religionists of Europe and America to get the honour of championing the cause of liberty, but would also discredit Islam by charging it with favouring slavery. Indeed the Muslim states, with their customary lethargy, did not follow the latest fashion of philanthropy as regards abolition. The time was thus quite ripe for the Abolitionists to give the civilized world an exposition of humanitarian sentiment with all its dramatic earnestness. The continuation of isolated cases of buying and selling domestic slaves in the land of Islam afforded an opportunity to those who wished to stir up universal opprobrium against the Muslim institutions.

The attempt in this direction may perhaps

be characterized as humanitarian, aiming as it does essentially at freedom for slaves. The object was, however, scarcely of a magnanimous nature, being to divert attention from the cruel record of Christendom in the exploitation of the slave traffic. The number of slaves transported by Christians across the Atlantic from the shores of Africa, which were not under the influence of Islam, is estimated to have been something between five and seven millions. In America and in the European possessions across the Atlantic there are millions of the descendants of these Africans; and, although Christians, these people cannot escape the contempt of the white men who will always regard them as a very inferior race. It is very hard luck for these Christianized blacks to be always so regarded, and their situation in society is quite an abnormal one. No traces of such an inhuman parody of humanity can be found in the world of Islam.

It is all very well to contend that in the countries wrested from the yoke of Islam by the Christian Powers in Africa, mission stations are built on the ground formerly occupied by slave markets, where Christian endeavour secures freedom to slaves. Nothing could enlighten us more on this point than the

official correspondence of the British Government on the subject. From following this correspondence one learns that slaves taken away from their Mussulman masters through the efforts of the anti-slavery societies (among whose members a good many persons interested in missionary enterprise figure conspicuously) are not placed in a much happier position in life. Once an emancipated slave leaves his master's home, the kindly proselytizer of Christendom is ready to give him a helping hand, and the name of the freed African is triumphantly added to the list of the year's converts. Any booty captured by the Cross from the Crescent must needs be esteemed as a gain for humanity. Whether the majority of the liberated slaves become desirable Christians is a question which admits of very grave doubt. It is, however, certain that a good many of them do not know how to follow the right path in the new state of existence which emancipation secures to them, and turn into dissolute vagabonds. Some of the freed persons, indeed, fall back on the compassion of their former masters for shelter and means of sustenance.

In spite of agreements between Great Britain and the governments of Egypt (1877) and Turkey (1880) guaranteeing a strict surveillance over the importation of slaves, a few slaves are said to be smuggled out of Africa every year. It is difficult to ascertain the accuracy of this report. It may be true. It should, however, be remarked that isolated cases of selling and buying slaves in those regions of Africa which come under the domination of European States are not unheard of events. The perpetrators of this illegitimate transaction are not only wild Arab raiders, but certain European adventurers are said to have an interest in the traffic. It looks as if some fortune-hunters in Africa, although they belong to civilized Europe, would sell, not only the helpless blacks but also perhaps their own mothers into slavery, if their greed for money-making were thereby better satisfied.

* * * *

With a view to rendering a service to those European romancers who hunt in vain to discover slave markets in some big Eastern

towns in order to find subjects for their tales, we beg to submit to their notice a few items dealing with the slave traffic. On these items they can found tales more interesting, more familiar, and more realistic:—

“A negro boy, about nine years of age, in a grey serge suit, his hair cut close to his head, was lost on Tuesday last, the 9th August, at night in St. Nicholas Lane, London. If anyone can give notice of him to Mr. Thomas Baker at the Sugarloaf in that Lane they shall be well rewarded.”

“Run away from his master, Captain St. Lo, 21st inst., Abdullah Elias, a Moor, swarthy complexion, short frizzled hair, a gold ring in his ear, in a black coat and blue breeches. He took with him a blue Turkish watch gown, a Turkish suit of clothing that he used to wear about town. Whoever brings him to Mr. Lozel’s house in Green Street shall have one guinea reward.”

“A black boy twelve years of age, fit to wait on a gentleman, to be disposed of at Denis’s Coffee-House in Finch Lane.”

“To be sold, a negro boy, aged eleven years. Enquire Virginia Coffee-House in Threadneedle Street.”

"A black boy, an Indian, about thirteen years old, ran away on the 8th inst. from Putney, with a collar about his neck, with this inscription: 'The Lady Bromfield's black, in Lincoln's Inn Fields.' Whoever brings him to Sir Edward Bromfield's, at Putney, shall have a guinea reward."¹

1. See the article *Advertisements* published in the *Quarterly Review* in 1855.



CHAPTER XI.

THE SUBJECTION OF THE CRESCENT.

The diplomatic meaning of the term "*action civilisatrice*"—Aborigines die out on the introduction of the "good rule," but Orientals with a native civilization remain as a hindering factor; France could not absorb the Mussulmans of Algeria by the French element—Reason why Muslim nations prefer their worst tyrants to the "good rule" of the civilized European; Advantages of the civilized rule fatal to the proper development of the conquered—Foreign-made freedom is fictitious—Civilized rule affects the soil rather than the people of the soil—Recalcitrant natives must not be allowed to obstruct the exploitations of the capitalist—Care of commerce as an excuse for conquest; When a Power invades a Muslim country, the commerce of other Powers is prejudiced there—Methods of conquering Powers to prevent Muslim nations from making progress—The far Eastern nations have saved themselves from interference—Significance of a *Times* article.

IN the language of diplomacy the French term "*action civilisatrice*" may still have an impressive sound, but owing to the free use made of it by every politician and journalist, the sense of the term has been much contaminated with vulgarity. The dignified charm of the English phrase "our good rule and justice,"

so frequently employed in English political literature dealing with the affairs of the East, has also begun to degenerate into something like a commonplace. The notion intended by the term is this, that when one of the mighty Powers of Christendom finds it incumbent upon itself to take under its patronising ægis the internal affairs of a Muslim nation, which is incapable of holding its own, freedom and justice and the spread of civilization will either immediately or gradually follow the introduction of its good rule, and signs of the public well-being will spring up here, there and everywhere.

There is no necessity to cite here any examples of the astounding work which the civilizing Powers are doing in Eastern countries, as anyone who studies the political settlement of these countries can find ample instances for himself. It should only be remarked that all the pains taken in this direction are at the expense of the sovereign rights and national independence of the people which submit to the civilizing tutelage.

In the territorial expansions of the Christian Powers two factors may be met with.

The first is the aboriginal inhabitants of the country which is invaded by a civilizing Power. Finding their interests clash with those of the aborigines the invaders may consider it convenient to get rid of them. The dispersed creatures either die out in the course of time or what remains of them forms a Christianized yet at the same time an inferior community, serving the invading masters; consequently the work of civilization proceeds without alien hindrance. The second is the contact of the invaders with inhabitants who have a civilization of their own, no matter to what extent they may be materially less progressive than the European invaders. Such a population presents a serious hindrance to the march of European civilization which, it should be emphasized, promises the conquered population much good in the long run. Unfortunately, this hindrance must, for the sake of civilization, be overcome—by brute force, if necessary. If the employment of the superior weapons which are amply possessed by every civilized Power are not of avail, every legitimate exercise of cunning must be resorted to, so that the refractory population be made amenable to reason. Humanity requires that the right to manage the affairs of an unprogressive country thus

invaded should, at any cost, pass into the trust of the people which is civilized in the European sense of the word.

The project of the introduction of European civilization into Oriental countries belonging to the second category is interesting and theoretically sound. But when we come to examine how it works we find a gruesome situation. If a conquered nation has a native culture and civilization their absorption by settlers who may come from the European country which has conquered them, is a hard matter, and the attempt of the invaders to rule over their country does not meet with conspicuous success. They must always resent the injustice of the intrusion. The weakening of their social forces and the undermining of their national authority will not free the invader from opposition ; while their annihilation is an alternative of a very perilous and very dubious nature. Unlike the aborigines, they do not afford the civilized conqueror the welcome relief by dying out fast. It is for these reasons that France has not been able to turn Algeria into something like Australia. France has taken various sanguinary measures, but she could only partially clear the maritime districts of Algeria from their Muslim

population. She exerted her utmost energy in persistently infiltrating the French element into that country ; yet even her most sanguine chauvinists could not hope to counterbalance the numerical superiority of Mussulmans for a long time to come, if ever.

For this reason an Eastern country which is inhabited by Mussulmans could not be rightly called a "colony" when it falls under the rule of a foreign Power. Such terms as "possessions" or "dominions" are thought to designate it more appropriately. It is also appropriate to describe the condition of the population thus conquered, as "subjection." All the people of the Eastern countries which are subjugated by civilizing Powers are called "natives," a term which has a tinge of contempt in it.

It may be assumed that "natives" are inferior people who resign themselves to all the verdicts of the superior people who grant them a civilized rule. This is not the case with most of the Muslim races subject to the rule of a foreign Power. A Muslim nation might have been living under its own rulers in a state of what is described in the European

press as complete anarchy. But it is a bold misrepresentation of the truth to say that they would welcome the authority of any European nation in preference to the administration of their own misrulers. The civilized rule of foreign invaders is hardly ever wanted ; it is always imposed upon them by force only and its much-vaunted advantages will sooner or later turn out to be, on the whole, detrimental rather than beneficial to the subjugated "natives." In an independent Muslim country a despot or a small faction of tyrants may oppress the bulk of the people, but, at the same time, anyone among the people has the chance of becoming somebody ; anyone can aspire to attain the highest standing in the political and social life of his nation. When once the prerogatives of the sovereignty of his nation are superseded by European domination, he will be reduced to the status allowed to a subject race ; even the most intelligent and capable among his fellow compatriots will become subordinate to the foreign masters, and the scope of the development of the national genius will be curtailed in all directions.

In such a state of subjection, moreover, the civilizing rulers of Europe will tentatively

introduce their own methods and ways into the management of the national affairs, and supersede the native tongue by their own language for administrative as well as educational purposes. These and many other circumstances which characterize the march of European civilization in the Orient, while securing preponderating advantages to the European civilizers, bring about for the people of the subjugated country such disabilities as may be fatal to their social, political and intellectual advancement.

There appears to be a respectably large consensus of opinion on the advantage of the "freedom" which the territorial expansions of the civilized Powers of Europe establish in those Eastern countries so long oppressed by the tyranny of their native rulers. Freedom is, of course, a great blessing which is desired by everyone. Nevertheless, the enjoyment of freedom depends on the way in which the people upon whom freedom is bestowed understand it. To suppress the national independence of a people in the interests of your civilized rule; to undermine their time-honoured national institutions under

the plea that they appear to you corrupt and antiquated; to disarm the people or put the existing forces of their country under your own control, and then give them freedom of speech and of the press, so that they may shout out whatever criticism they like. This is the kind of freedom some of the civilized Powers of Europe bestow upon the Oriental countries which they go to rule, and this is the sort of liberal concession which does not make a gratifying impression on the Eastern mind. What is the good of grumbling freely if the civilized rulers treat your outcry of discontent with an unperturbed sneer? They well know that a dog that is deprived of his teeth may bark when his tail is trodden on, but cannot bite, at any rate, to any purpose.

It is not the subject people but the civilizing conquerors who reap the real advantage of any liberty their rule may bring with it, as the free expression of the feelings of discontent or despair cannot but furnish them with forewarnings as to the necessity of frustrating any movement of disaffection which might turn out prejudicial to their predominance. It is therefore of prime importance to get acquainted with the trend of public feeling among a subjugated population

by granting them freedom of speech and of the press. When once the elements of any united move on the part of the subject people to shake off the yoke of the rule imposed upon them are thus undermined, it will be comparatively easy to hold the reins of authority with a tighter hand.

The civilizing enterprises of a European power are no doubt sometimes conducive to the growth of prosperity in the Oriental country it occupies. But is it the soil, or is it the native of the soil, that is affected by this foreign-made prosperity? The treasury is filled by the taxes wrung from the natives; it is, however, controlled and disbursed by the hand of the foreign rulers. The resources of the soil are developed principally to the advantage of the conquerors. The *exploiteur* who hails from the country of the ruling Power is the man who makes the biggest harvest, while the share of the subject people in the newly created prosperity can hardly compensate for the material injuries, to say nothing of the social forfeitures, which the loss of the national independence involves.

In a state of prosperity thus brought

about it is not difficult to conceive of the scanty chances of the conquered Orientals, especially when the destinies of the entire administration of their country are entrusted by charter to some Company. Millions upon millions of Oriental people have been governed by such European Companies. In Europe the labourer can find some legitimate means of vindication against any grubbing tyranny of the capitalist; but against the possible exactions of such "Limited Company Rule," as we may style this sort of civilized administration, the subjugated Oriental has no tangible remedy, except rebellion, which would be put down by the forces of the state to which the Company is subject. In such an eventuality who would take up the cause of the "natives" with any sympathy? Certainly not the quasi-Jewish press in Europe, whose sympathies run with all the glorious achievements of civilization abroad.

It goes without saying that it is not the sentimental duty of extending good rule and justice but the practical consideration of opening up the resources of nature which prompts the great Powers to introduce

Western civilization into the Oriental countries. "The natural wealth of remoter regions must be utilized for the benefit of mankind," so an American writer explains this fact, "and, at any rate, the world must be policed, so that in every part of it investments of capital may be made secure, and so that industrial works may be carried on without annoyance from the natives."¹ To this observation we may add that the people of these remote regions of the world must be given no chance of developing the resources of their own country on their own native lines and pretexts must always be found, in the name of humanity, Christianity and civilization, to harass and attack them, so that they may be retarded from acquiring any capacity and strength to hold their own ground against the inrush of the greedy hordes of civilized jingoism.

As we are dealing with the case of the Muslim East we may be asked how the nations living under the "retrogressive" influence of Islam could be capable of progressive development, and whether Islamism and progress are not two irreconcilable entities? According to the notions prevailing in Christendom on the

1. P. S. Reisch, *World Politics*, p. 11.

subject, Islamism is quite incompatible with the elements of civilized development. This idea is propounded even by men who have a claim to be serious thinkers, and, indeed, one such serious thinker goes so far as to say that when Islam's "first burst of fanaticism had subsided, and its secret structure began to reveal itself, it was found to be incapable of expansion, devoid of sympathy and fatal to material and intellectual advancement." It is a pity that weighty phraseology should be wasted on expounding baseless notions of this kind in the name of philosophic speculation. Islamism did not discourage men from improving their condition, indeed it encouraged them to promote their material and intellectual development long before Christendom had conceived any properly balanced ideas on progress and civilization. We need not as an example refer to the work accomplished by the Mussulmans in Spain, because it is fairly well known even to a casual reader of history. Nor would we try to bring evidences from Oriental sources; let us only quote here the opinion of an Occidental writer eminently well-versed in the subject in question. "They

1. J. B. Crozier, *Civilization and Progress*, p. 431.

have overrun," says this author, speaking of the early Mussulmans, "the dominions of science as quickly as they overran the realms of their neighbours. Within twenty years after the death of Muhammed, patronage of learning had become a settled principle of the Muhammadan system. The cultivators of mathematics, astronomy, medicine and general literature abounded in the court of Almansour."

The impetus which human energy derived from the influence of Islamism was not inconsiderable, neither was it of an ephemeral character, and the people under the Crescent have, for centuries, striven to reach higher stages of activity in all then existing forms of development. It was at the moment when the nations of Christendom began to rush on the store-land of the Orient to satisfy the ever growing requirements of life, that a shock of disruption began to be felt throughout the Muslim East, paralyzing its society materially as well as intellectually. The shock has been severe and continuous, as the European onrush for new fortune and power knew no limit. In some parts of the Muslim East the rise of the

I. J. W. Draper: *A History of the Intellectual Development of Europe*: vol. I., ch. XI.

Ottoman power created a stronghold against this overwhelming tide of expansion, but this was only for a period and with disastrous consequences to the Ottoman Empire itself; for it has exposed that Power for ever to a deadly and fanatical animosity in Christendom, and has ultimately made it the perpetual victim of the diplomatic tomfoolery of the European Concert.

The long struggle between the East and West has resulted not only in triumph for the Occidental invaders, but has also brought about a sinister lull in the intellectual activity and material progress of the Muslim Orient. It is not therefore by reason of the indolence "decreed by inexorable fate" that the Islamic world has so long remained unprogressive in the path of civilization. It is not owing to the fatalism to which Mussulmans are supposed to abandon themselves so blindly, that they had to leave the exploitation of the resources of their own countries to the civilizing care of the Christian Powers. Indeed it is contrary to the principles of the Muslim system not to take righteous advantage of the gifts of nature which Divine Providence has placed within the reach of man. It is, however, equally contrary to the spirit of Islam to profit by the

bounty of nature without moderation and contentment, and to make a mad rush on all the resources of nature regardless of the detrimental consequences which such rash and uncontrolled greed might cause to the rights of others. The action of Mussulmans in this respect differs from the enterprise of wealth-seekers in civilized Europe, who seem madly anxious to penetrate to every region of the globe, as though they were going to pluck up all the riches of the earth at once, with an indecent disregard of the claims of other people.

The desire to assure the growth of commerce is one of the reasons for the rival rush of the European states on Muslim dominions. The care of commerce is certainly of vital importance to all nations with growing industries. But was there any Muslim country which did not really wish to have trade relations with the subjects of the Powers which had invaded and seized Muslim countries one after another, if the promotion of commerce were not made a prelude to territorial aggression? The European merchant used to be welcomed in the East in the past, because he was regarded as the friend of the

people to whom he supplied the articles they required. In the Levant and in Egypt the extra-territorial privileges of the subjects of European Powers which are known under the name of "capitulations," and which have been so grossly abused by the same Powers in recent times, were granted in order to assure the business relations of these merchants. It is, however, a fact that when the Powers began to assume an alarmingly aggressive policy of territorial acquisition there appeared on the scene of activity in the East more adventurers with dangerous political designs than innocent men of commerce. Merchants imported their goods and having contributed towards the common prosperity went away, but adventurers with insatiable desires to acquire fame and fortune, hailed down upon the East only in order to import their "good rule" and thus undermine the independence of Muslim nations.

' Had the movement of imperialism of the European Powers been confined only to those regions of the Orient which are inhabited by savage races, and had the territories of Muslim states with long established national independence and with a culture and civilization of their own not been molested, no Oriental of

common-sense would dream of imperilling the growth of the trade relations between the Orient and the Occident. On the contrary, under such circumstances, the commerce of all European nations would have flourished equally in any of the Muslim countries now ruled over by one Power or other. Treaty obligations or the industrial backwardness of such an Oriental country might constrain her to adhere to principles of free trade of some sort. Under the domination of any European Power it is doubtful whether the commerce of other nations can have equal chances of growth in such a Muslim country. If it is under the rule of a Power which adheres to the "open door" principle, the trade of the Ruling Power there is pushed on, to the disadvantage of other European Powers, by methods best known to its administrators. If it is subjected to the rule of a Protectionist Power the chance of the commercial competition of other nations is hopelessly obstructed within its boundaries.

We may take the case of Algeria as an example. The civilizing rule of France puts a distinct check on the growth of the commercial interests of other nations in Algeria. The annual trade return between France and Algeria, according to the statistics given in

an authoritative work¹ published in 1898, amounts to a total of 330,294,702 francs, while the trade return between Great Britain and Algeria is 22,632,115 francs, and that of the United States 2,943,483 francs. The trade returns between other Western countries and Algeria are also preposterously small in proportion. France's "action civilisatrice" in Tunisia has also obstructed the growth of the trade of other European countries with the Tunisian possessions. If France had not taken possession of these two most important countries of North Africa the other commercial states of Europe would now have far greater facilities for promoting their trade interests in these two Muslim provinces. Railways, good roads, comfortable hotels, etc. which have sprung up there since the French occupation, may gratify the desires of the French capitalists; they may, moreover, be of great use to idle travellers with plenty of money who hail from Europe and America. But the whole world is not prepared, like these persons, to look upon such innovations as the only blessings which civilization might produce abroad.

1. Leroy-Beaulieu, *De la Colonisation chez les Nations Modernes*. Fourth Edition, p. 397.

202 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS.

It appears that Christian Europe will not be satisfied with refusing to the Muslim Orient all rights to independence. Watching the signs of an awakening in most parts of the East she furthermore wishes to shackle the efforts of Muslim nations to work out their own salvation. Many instances might be given to illustrate the methods practised by the European Powers for the purpose of obstructing Islamic progress. The following are only a few instances of these methods: They continually make aggressive demands on the Muslim nations, and their demands are always accompanied by the threat of using force either singly by one Power, or unitedly by several Powers, whenever the so-called cause of humanity is made an excuse for their selfish ends. The Powers often take steps to secure more concessions, and in order to attain their objects they interfere periodically with the sacred rights of the Muslim countries, even under the most grotesque excuses. In order to encourage the European public to support any war or expedition against Muslim nations, the political organs of the Powers, with much malice, represent every legitimate movement of awakening in the Muslim Orient as a “peril” to the march of civilization.

In the following chapter we shall express our views on the Oriental “peril” and show that it is the East which has most to fear from the peril of Occidental aggression. So far as the people of the Far East are concerned there remains now but very little danger for their national independence. It must be within the recollection of those who have observed the trend of events in world politics that some little time ago the favourite scheme of carrying out the “civilizing mission” in Eastern Asia used to engage the attention of the high jingo circles of Christendom more seriously than the civilizing work in the Muslim East. The numerical superiority and the great compactness of the Far Eastern races at first but slightly disturbed the sanguine hopes of the Christian Powers of accomplishing their schemes of civilization. Nevertheless, in the Far East the absence of large native Christian communities, such, for instance, as Armenians and Bulgarians, had an embarrassing effect upon the schemes of the Christian Powers, because such communities would naturally have afforded the Powers splendid opportunities of attacking and conquering Oriental barbarism. Another obstacle to carrying out the work of Christian

civilization in the Far Orient was the greatness of the distance ; Christian war-ships could not easily be sent out every now and then on trips to the Far East to accomplish some civilizing and humanitarian work, as they are so frequently sent out to the Near Eastern waters. The rise of the Japanese power had also something to do with the modification of the civilizing projects which Christendom had originally thought out for the Far East.

Much attention has, however, been paid by the Powers to China's *need of civilization*. She has been embarrassed and squeezed continually. Tentative attempts have been made to impress China with her imperative duty to fall in with the wishes of the civilized world. But the Divine Will must apparently be against the good intentions of Christendom, as China no longer lends a ready ear to the guiding principles dictated to her by any Christian Power, and she means to work out her own salvation and develop the resources of her own dominions. The attitude of the civilizing Powers towards the Celestial Empire has of late undergone a significant change. From Western diplomacy China now receives a little more courteous consideration, and her sovereign rights are treated with a little more

respect. The chauvinist publicists of the West who used to speculate so haughtily on the problem of the European spheres of influence in the Far East, are now beginning to expound to the obtuse world the self-evident theory that China has as much right as any other state to manage her own affairs. As an example of how the public mind is now trained to accept the truth of this theory we may give an extract from a leading article of the *Times* of the 2nd January, 1906, dealing with the organization of a new Chinese army :

“ This would give China the truly formidable force of 432,000 men, with a reserve of a quarter of a million, and, if they are true to the sample at the recent manœuvres, they will relieve the Powers very effectively from all *anxiety for the integrity and independence of the Chinese Empire.* ”

The significance of the above quotation does not require any comments. It should only be explained that the word “ anxiety ” means here the tender care usually taken by the Christian Powers for the welfare of the uncivilized or semi-civilized peoples in the Far as well as in the Near East. As to the words “ integrity ” and “ independence,” they should be understood as “ dismemberment ” and “ sub-

206 THE CRESCENT VERSUS THE CROSS.

jection" respectively. Accordingly the gist of the remarks of the *Times* amounts to this, that the Christian Powers need no longer be over-anxious for the disintegration and subjugation of China. They can have much greater opportunities for fulfilling their humanitarian endeavours as well as for the introduction of the reforms of civilization in a more convenient quarter, namely, in the Muslim East.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PAN-ISLAMIC PERIL.

Pan-Islamism is at present a mare's nest ; excessive imperialism may rouse the Orientals to take care of themselves—"Noblest work of an officer is to disintegrate Islam"—"Fanaticism" as the cause of the unhappiness of Mussulmans under civilized Powers. In the glowing account of the civilizing administration we should read between the lines. Wretched condition of the Muslim Algerians under France ; Policies of *rejoulement* and *fusionnement* directed against them ; Mussulmans denied the right of citizenship—The rule of the British is more durable than that of France ; The British do not send emigrants to the invaded Muslim lands ; Russian claim to civilize Asia is grotesque ; Great Muslim exodus from countries invaded by Russia—Servile condition of the Mussulmans in Dutch possessions ; The massacres of Mussulmans by the Dutch were not noticed by the Western humanitarians—Treatment of Islamism in Europe characterized by intolerance.

BEFORE going into the consideration of the subjects under the above title it will be necessary to learn what the term "Pan-Islamism" really means. Is it a political organism ? We say it is not, and by way of explanation we borrow a picturesque definition

given to the term by an English Orientalist. "Pan-Islamism," said this gentleman, "is a mare's nest discovered by a correspondent of the *Times*". As to the term "Pan-Islamic Peril" which forms the theme of this chapter, it will perhaps be of some interest to mention that the Pan-Islamic Peril is a counterpart of the "Yellow Peril" which, thanks to Muscovite diplomacy rather than to the lively interest reported to have been taken in it by the German Emperor, has become so generally known throughout the Christian world. Coming to the meaning of the word "peril" itself, as is scarcely necessary to explain, it simply connotes the idea of a bogey which haunts the minds of evilly-intentioned persons just at the moment when they are going to commit an unlawful act, such, for example, as robbery or territorial usurpation.

If the term Pan-Islamism connotes the generally received notion of an understanding existing among the more enlightened of Mussulmans throughout the East with a view to upholding what vestige of independence the Islamic world still possesses, there is but little

1. *Pan-Islamism*: A Cambridge Extension Lecture, by Prof. E. G. Browne. University Press, 1902.

doubt that the necessity for such an understanding is gaining widespread recognition. Sooner or later the urgent need of taking some active precautions in this direction must seriously engage the Muslim mind.

In the course of the evolution of political events of international importance it is usually seen that the misfortunes sustained by one country furnish opportunities to another. The insatiable desire for domineering, which, in recent times, has been so characteristic of Occidental imperialism, has, no doubt, derived much gratification from the adverse circumstances which have befallen the East. The growing imperialist expansions of the West have, however, aggravated the feelings of despair among the people of the Islamic East, who have sustained corresponding losses, and have had the effect of rousing the Oriental mind to contemplate making a combined effort for self-defence. Judging by what they observe of the schemes of Western imperialism they conclude that not a single non-Christian nation will be allowed to remain master of its native soil. This anxiety among Orientals is what prompted the professional

agitators in Western Europe to invent a "Pan-Islamic Peril." One frequently notices in the pages of the leading papers and in the political literature of Western Europe remarks which are typically illustrative of their methods of agitation. We need perhaps only cite here the opinion of a prominent continental politician in which he suggests a way to suppress this peril: "The rôle of an officer," said this politician, "who should undertake to disintegrate any forces of Islam would be the noblest and most useful that a man can play for his country."¹ These words express not only a typical jingo sentiment but also a spirit of ferocity which we consider very unbecoming in a member of a civilized community. They were used in connection with the extension of the French rule in the Muslim lands of North Africa; they were used, strange to say, by a man who, in the name of humanity and universal peace, publicly professes deep sympathy for the Armenians and Bulgarians under the rule of Turkey.

The existence of a real and active

1. Baron d'Estournelles de Constant, *Les Congrégations Religieuses chez les Arabes et la Conquête de l'Afrique*. p. 70. Paris, 1887.

Pan-Islamic peril is credited even by the more thoughtful among the general public, because the chauvinistic wire-pullers know the effect of bringing it to the notice of the public with convincing insistence. If men of Peter the Hermit type had not assured the Faithful that the Muslim infidels desecrated the Holy Land (as a matter of fact Muslims entertained profound feelings of veneration towards this same Holy Land) the interest taken in the Crusades would, perhaps, have been of a very lukewarm kind. The Crusades carried on against the infidels in the good old days secured results which were greatly beneficial to Christendom: above all, they broke the rising power of Islam—a blessed result which alone outweighs the appalling sacrifice of human life entailed by the Crusading expeditions. Pan-Islamism, whose imminence is foreseen and foretold by so many earnest jingoes,¹ might endanger the sacred interests of modern Christendom in the Orient, and accordingly it should be crushed without any sentimental

1. As we are now considering civilized Jingoism at large we do not use the word "jingo" in a party sense. We draw no line of difference between jingoes and chauvinists, as we are not quite sure whether they are not the same irresponsible beings who will soon bring contempt upon the name of European civilization,

or humanitarian considerations ; since its suppression will materially further civilization, even to the extent of compensating for all the bloody struggles which the task of suppression may entail.

Supposing the anxiety now increasingly felt in the Orient regarding the security of the remaining vestiges of Islamic independence were to lead to a combined movement in self-defence on the part of Mussulmans, would it not be a "terminological inexactitude" to style such combined action a "peril" to Europe? In our opinion it is an instance of inexact terminology to so represent it, because if any united effort of the above description should ever be brought about, it would be directed against a veritable danger, the "peril" of further encroachment upon the rights of the Muslim world. Inexactitudes and misrepresentations of this sort are, however, uttered in the higher interests of imperialism. The man in the street is not able, neither has he the right, to question the morality of the guiding principles of the higher statecraft, more especially in the matter of territorial expansion. Moreover, in the interests of humanity at large, it is perfectly legitimate to call attention in due time, by all possible means, even by perversion

of fact, to the growth of a mischievous movement of resistance which the ignorant and semi-barbarous Orientals might direct against the advantage of European civilization. To regard this mischievous movement with equanimity will certainly threaten the march of civilization with perilous consequences.

As to the happy condition of those Muslim races which have already fallen under the rule of one or other of the Christian Powers, glowing accounts appear in the leading papers of Christendom ; while, on the other hand, in spite of the awe-inspiring policy of supporting that rule with fire and sword, discontent and bloodshed are of frequent occurrence in the conquered countries. The mind of the general public is not trained to understand the reason why the subject races of the East should revolt against the justice and order which European rule secures to them, and from time to time cause so much bloodshed to so little purpose. Did not these "natives" suffer terribly under the deplorable anarchy which prevailed during the reigns of their native rulers ? These strange phenomena of discontent and revolt are no doubt perplexing in the extreme. But the perplexity of the general public is immediately dispelled when authenticated

214 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS.

accounts in the leading papers assure them that the influence of "fanaticism" is the sole cause of all these regrettable incidents.

It is often said that Mussulmans are the greatest fanatics in the world. But it might also be added that their fanaticism is never so clearly shown as in their preferring the maladministration of their own rulers to any more beneficent form of government which is imposed on them by any of the civilizing Powers. The source of this fanatical idea, as was fully explained in the last chapter, lies in the fact that sound administration, liberty and prosperity are of little worth when compared with the religious difficulties, national indignities and native disabilities which the civilized rule of the foreigner brings in its train.

Having followed with close interest the political transformations which the ascendancy of the civilizing Powers is continually bringing about in the Muslim East, we venture to express our views on the true situation of the Muslim races in question. It is our close and personal interest in this situation which compels us to read between the lines of all those glowing and cheering accounts in the

European press regarding the condition of these subject Muslims. We here propose to glance rapidly at the position of the Muslim populations governed by the various states of Christendom. Our very concise review of their position will sufficiently show what attractions the much-vaunted civilized rule of a Christian Power has to offer to those who still enjoy an independent national existence, however they may be oppressed under the much maligned Oriental tyranny.

We must begin with the case of France : in the first place because France is supposed to have no official state religion and consequently no pious prejudices against the customs and institutions of the Mussulmans under her rule ; secondly because among all the colonising races of Europe Frenchmen are distinguished by an inordinate fondness for enlarging on the civilizing achievements they have accomplished in the benighted lands of the Orient ; thirdly, Orientals are not a little interested in the impressive prominence given by many French publicists to the ideas of liberty, fraternity, and the " rights of man."

" It would have been a glorious circumstance," so wrote an English author, who does

not seem to have any national prejudice when dealing with the colonial policy of his own country, "to have been able to represent them ("the French") as an exception. But they have shown as little regard for the rights or feelings of the people whose lands they have invaded for the purpose of civilization."¹ These words were spoken before some millions of Mussulmans in North Africa came under the dominion of France.

The introduction of European civilization into Algeria was not the result of that "pacific penetration" about which we now hear so much in connection with the Moroccan affairs. Only after persistent and long-continued exertion did France succeed in concocting a sufficient *casus belli* to warrant a descent on Algeria. The diplomacy by means of which France attained this object might be characterised as anything but edifying. Like a debtor who puts off his creditors with unblushing indifference, France had left long unpaid her debts to the Algerian rulers from whom she bought supplies. When on this account relations between the two countries on both sides of the Mediterranean were somewhat

1. *Colonisation and Christianity*, p. 312. William Howitt.
1838.

strained, a fortunate incident occurred which was of course immediately construed by France into a gross insult to her representative in Algiers who had long been trying to pick a quarrel. Thereupon France invaded the country and a fierce struggle ensued, in the course of which more ghastly butcheries were committed by the civilized invaders than by the resisting Mussulmans. On one occasion the invaders carried their fury so far as to suffocate about five hundred men, women and children in a cave at Ouled Riah, where these helpless terror-stricken wretches had sought refuge. It is difficult not to admire the plausible style of those French writers who explain away the "regrettable mistake" of the French commander in causing a fire to be lighted at the mouth of the cave.

The reports of all the heroic deeds of this type on the part of the civilized Frenchmen inspired the Mussulmans with dread. Accordingly when the French troops after a bloody fight stormed the town of Constantine, hundreds of its inhabitants, old men, women and children among them, threw themselves down from the steep rocks of the majestic pass, below the town, and perished. Arab traditions relate that these people killed them-

selves in order to avoid falling into the hands of their terrible enemy. But in a book now before us¹ it is stated that the ropes with which these people tried to descend the precipices gave way (most of the ropes, be it noticed, if not all), so causing the death of the fugitives. Which of these two versions is the more reliable? In connection with a certain mandate, which Europe was alleged to have given France, authorising her to set Morocco in order, somebody lied, either a French diplomatist or a Moorish dignitary. Several leading papers, including the *Times*, urged that a civilized French gentleman should be believed rather than a semi-barbarous Oriental potentate. Therefore in the case of the Constantine story we must believe in the French version, as the civilized gentleman of Europe has the more cultured skill to invest his story with more fascination and convincing plausibility.

Be this as it may, France had finally subdued the Mussulmans, and her work of civilization in North Africa began in earnest. She tried two distinct policies consecutively. Her colonizing officials at first wished to clear the conquered country of its Muslim population

1. *Histoire de l'Algérie par ses Monuments.* Edition de la Revue Illustrée.

as far as possible. This is the policy of *refoulement*, which consisted in driving out the Mussulmans over the Atlas Mountains or even into the Sahara. Later on they hit upon the gigantic idea of absorbing the Mussulmans. This is the plan of *fusionnement*, which not only included the encouragement of French colonists and of other settlers of Latin origin naturalized as French citizens, with a view to swamping the "native" population, but also sought to impose upon the Algerians, either by constraint or by gradual propagation, the French ideals, customs and laws, and even Christianity. The attempts in these directions yielded no results satisfactory to the conquerors, except in so far as they struck a fatal blow at the foundations of Muslim society, that slow growth of centuries, scattered the Mussulmans in helpless confusion and reduced them to a state of complete destitution. The most fertile districts of Algeria were cleared of their Muslim inhabitants with some success. But these people could not easily be replaced by the French colonists, since these were not forthcoming in sufficient numbers. It must be disheartening for the French chauvinists to reflect that, however active Frenchwomen may be in other respects, they do not make a

genuine effort to give France more children, so that she may be able to fill up the conquered provinces of North Africa with the French element.

"We have given justice and liberty to the Muslim population, and secured to them the opportunity of acquiring wealth," an important French official once said in our hearing in Algiers. He was of course, quite solemnly in earnest when explaining this benevolence on the part of his country. "We are fooled all round, and deprived of all privileges of citizenship enjoyed by the French settlers," so any Mussulman of intelligence will tell you, if he feels assured that you will not expose him to the displeasure of the colonial authorities. Anyone travelling in the North African possessions of France will notice how sad, downtrodden, and poverty-stricken the Muslim people appear. They have not enough work, and very little land worth cultivating is left in their possession. In the year 1871 alone 300,000 hectares of land were taken from the Mussulmans who revolted against the French rule, and in addition an indemnity of thirty million francs was imposed upon them.¹ This

1. See *L'Expansion Coloniale de la France*, p. 42. J. L. de Lanessan.

was a crushing blow to the Muslim population from which it is hardly possible that it will ever recover.

It is quite natural that a conquering race should promote the use of its own language in a country of which it has gained possession. But in France's North African dominions the French language and literature are actively pushed forward to the utter detriment of Arabic learning. The patronizing French officialdom wanted to penetrate into all shades of life among the Muslim community, and by this means to infuse into it certain European customs which are hopelessly unsuited to the requirements of an Oriental community. If the French had followed that example of proud aloofness set by Englishmen in abstaining from coming into close contact with the subject population, their rule would have been a little more supportable to the Mussulmans. In interfering with the religious affairs of the Mussulmans the French colonial authorities went so far as to prevent the Algerian pilgrims from proceeding to Mecca, a prohibition which remained in force for eight years. Within the last few years, however, they have begun to allow some pilgrims to proceed thither under certain conditions and they are now

222 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS.

conducted to Jedda under the escort of a French official. These measures have been taken under the baseless belief that the pilgrims might introduce into Algeria the propaganda of that perilous "Pan-Islamism." While all the settlers and even the native Jews are regarded as citizens ("naturalisés") the Muslim inhabitants are treated as a subject population.

The above account may sufficiently illustrate the situation in which some three millions of the Mussulmans in Algeria are placed. A large army is quartered in the country, and the military prowess of France is strongly in evidence on all sides. This armed display may inspire the Mussulmans with a feeling of submission ; it certainly betrays to the outside world the fact that French ascendancy is based, not on the boasted good government which civilized France claims to have introduced, but on brute force alone.

The occupation of Tunisia is of comparatively recent date, but the Muslim inhabitants of that country are already feeling anxiety lest they should meet with precisely the same fate as their co-religionists across the Western borders.

In writing on the history of colonization an American inclines to accept the view that if the subjugated peoples decline to avail themselves of the order of things which the civilized states impose on them it becomes incumbent upon the civilizing Powers to destroy them as an inevitable alternative. "The natives," he says, "must then be exterminated or reduced to such numbers as to be readily controllable, and in this process, so contrary to civilization, but for its sake, the mother country must inevitably spend much treasure and blood."¹ If the Mussulmans under the rule of Great Britain had to be dealt with on the above principle it is not easy to conceive how the task of wiping them out, or even of reducing them to a controllable number, could be effected. The number of Mussulmans under British rule is said to be somewhere about one hundred millions.

We should not be faithful to our convictions if we assumed a prudent tone of flattery and said that the British rule is eagerly desired by the Mussulmans. But as the tide of European expansion in the Orient is irresistibly strong, an Eastern nation which

1. H. C. Morris, *History of Colonization*, vol. I., p. 21.

cannot hold its own must give a preference to one out of the many varieties of good government offered by Christendom. There is a very distinct advantage of the British occupation over that of other colonizing Powers; namely, that in no part of the Muslim East which has come under the domination of Great Britain is there likely to be any considerable influx of European emigrants. This fact augurs well for the future of any Oriental community under British rule.

It would be impossible in the short space at our disposal to fully review the effects of British rule on some scores of millions of Mussulmans; this subject can only be comprehensibly dealt with in a separate work.

Though undoubtedly to be classed among the expansionist Powers of Europe, Russia can lay but little claim to the title of "civilizing Power." Therefore she could not properly be said to benefit the people whom she made subject to her rule by imparting to them that civilization which she had herself to borrow from Western Europe. She had, however, a very subtle statecraft of her own by

means of which she convinced the world of her qualification to carry on a civilizing mission in Asia; and with a cleverly engineered diplomacy she succeeded in enlisting on her behalf the sympathies of Western Europe, where a large number of liberty-lovers, apostles of the international peace movement, and so-called humanitarians took upon themselves to advocate her claim to pose as the pioneer of civilization in Asia. Her mission once justified and accredited, she started suppressing the liberty and independence of one nation after another in the East. The march of Russian civilization in Asia continued unchecked until the beginning of the Far Eastern War. Then Japan, whose gallant services deserve the gratitude of all Asia, put an end to the farce of this "civilizing mission," at any rate in certain portions of the Asiatic continent.

Various Muslim races have fallen victims to the civilizing domination of Russia. In the Crimea, Caucasia and Central Asia, this domination has been characterised chiefly by the persistent endeavour to force Muscovite customs upon the conquered peoples. Everything has been done to propagate the doctrines of the Russian Church among the Mussulmans, and measures have been taken to discourage

the spread of Islamic studies. In some places the Russian authorities have gone so far as to interfere with the contents of the Koran, in which they suppressed certain passages, and also such verses as they pretended might lead to rebellion against the authority of Russia. An overwhelming horde of Russian colonists, who could claim no attributes of civilization beyond such as belong to a nomad tribe, were deported to the regions captured from the Mussulmans, and thus the work of absorbing the vanquished races was energetically pushed forward.

As one result of this mode of carrying civilization to the heart of Asia a great exodus of Mussulmans began and went on uninterruptedly. Anyone who has lived on the Bosphorus will know that streams of Muslim emigrants are continually pouring into Turkey from the Crimea, Kazan, the Caucasus and from other provinces seized by Russia. These people are not really mad fanatics, quitting their homesteads, sorrowfully renouncing their traditional attachment to the lands of their forefathers and seeking refuge in another country merely out of unreasoning hatred to a Christian government. They feel the vital necessity of securing for themselves conditions

of existence under which they may be free to observe their national usages and their faith without oppressive restrictions. Russia does not seem to realise the evil consequences of such a wide-spread movement of emigration on the economic development of the vast lands she has conquered. Political considerations appear of greater importance to her, as she is also obsessed by the spectre of the Pan-Islamic peril in such of the conquered territories as are inhabited by Muslim races.

Among the colonising Powers of secondary importance Holland has the largest Muslim population under her control. The methods of this state's colonial administration are held up as a model by some European writers. These persons treat the subject of colonization from their own materialistic point of view, discreetly hiding under the cloak of civilization the motives of rapacity and greed which underlie most colonization schemes. From an Oriental standpoint, however, this model colonial rule has reduced the natives of the Dutch East Indies to a status almost similar to that of serfdom. A kind of forced labour was exacted from the subject people, who had

228 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS.

to work in the plantations and to give their services in other enterprises undertaken by the Dutch authorities or by money-grubbing companies. The Muslim inhabitants of the Dutch possessions have long suffered from the overbearing attitude of the Dutch rulers, and have never ceased to revolt against their degrading situation. The European press is periodically supplied with details of fighting between the Dutch troops and the natives in which we constantly read how villages have been bombarded and assaulted and how hundreds of the natives have been killed on each occasion. These massacres of the oppressed Mussulmans have been going on for over a quarter of a century, yet no humanitarian movement has ever been started on their behalf in Western Europe, where a large number of tender-hearted civilized beings are ready to give every support to those Bulgarians and Armenians who are ruled by a Muslim state.

The above instances of the treatment of Mussulmans by Christian rulers only refer to the Orient, that is to say, only to purely Muslim countries subjugated by Christian states. Christendom has always been absolutely

intolerant towards Islam and its institutions on European soil. In the West, as we all know, the Mussulmans were wiped out centuries ago. In the Eastern or South Eastern regions of the European continent the concerted action of the Christian states has ever been characterized by a Machiavellian policy, that of constantly inflicting upon the vanquished elements of the Islamic power such grave injuries as could leave no chance of recovery. In order to wipe out the remnants of Islam from the European continent, all the methods of barbarism resorted to by Christendom in the name of humanity continue to be put in practice. The old fanatical hatred of Islamism is as fervent as ever ; the long cherished scheme of the final extirpation of Islam does not confine itself to the actual Ottoman elements imported into Europe centuries ago, but extends also to those original natives of European soil who adhere to the faith of Islam. Thanks to the valuable co-operation of the great civilized Powers of Europe there are now no Muslim inhabitants worthy of mention in Servia or Greece, and the disappearance of the Muslim element from Bosnia, Crete and Bulgaria may be looked for in the near future.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

The controversy not prompted by religious ecstasy ; hypocritical piety of statesmen—How the praises of “civilization” are chanted in the Orient ; Classification of political penmen—Abyssinia left independent and Morocco coveted ; those who support the independence of Bulgaria withhold from the Egyptians this national right ; The unprincipled partiality of the Powers towards Christian races may have perilous consequences. Islam will not adopt Jewish methods of self-defence—The Islamic world will cast in its lot with the Far East.

It is not at the prompting of any ecstatic religious enthusiasm that we have been moved to enter on the thorny path of controversy relating the Cross and the Crescent. We do not live in the utopia of a complacent self-delusion, and do not suppose that one can reach the goal of righteousness more surely by following our ways. If it was merely a question of discussing the comparative supernatural claims of the Cross and the Crescent, we should

unhesitatingly abstain from any controversy, and say with the poet :—

“ For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.”

There is a vital reason for our entering on this stormy controversy regarding Cross and Crescent. The crushing blows which Christian Europe is constantly dealing at the foundations of the whole society of Islam are the result of aspirations for political supremacy and territorial acquisition, although certainly prompted by that sentiment of religious enmity which is the imperishable legacy of the Crusades.

Indeed, among the statesmen of the great Powers of Europe (which undertake to decide the destiny of the East) there could hardly be found a single one who believes with a pious conviction in the necessity of imposing any form of Western Christianity upon the world of Islam. How can such a belief be seriously held by a sane statesman when Christianity is openly disregarded by the more cultured among the people of Christendom, or followed only as a matter of convention ? Yet it is not seldom that we hear a cabinet minister of, let us say, the French Republic (which is supposed to have no official religion), declaring in public

232 THE CRESCENT *VERSUS* THE CROSS.

the necessity of applying the principles of *Christian* civilization to Morocco or to some other Eastern state. Again, there have been, and no doubt there will be in future, English statesmen who seek to deal with the affairs of such Muslim countries as, for instance, Turkey, in a spirit more befitting a gentleman in Holy Orders than a responsible secretary of state. In both cases the conscience of the Christian statesmen is primarily stirred by motives other than purely Christian considerations. They want something new—concessions or perhaps adjustment of territories. In cases of this sort religious ardour is displayed only as a *point d'appui*, although, of course, when Islam is in question, even the most highly enlightened of European statesmen is not free from the inflexible religious prejudices of Christendom.

The religious-political warfare so fiercely waged against Islam in olden times sinks into insignificance when compared with the politico-religious onslaught which is being persistently directed by Christendom against the Muslim East in recent years. The progress made in modern times in the mechanical industries has secured to the Great Powers of Europe irresistible means of aggression, and, having the

advantages of superior weapons they have, for some generations past, been relentlessly asserting their predominance over the non-Christian races of mankind possessing only antiquated means of defence. An Eastern nation may have culture, refinement, and well developed institutions of its own, and yet it will not be spared ; it is regarded as barbarous or semi-civilized, and is always liable to be pounced upon by one or other of the Great Powers of Europe. They are the pioneers of civilization and their advance guards penetrate to every corner of the Eastern world, chanting the praise of their civilization, boasting over the sublime advantages of their own rule and terrorizing and crushing those who dare to show any reluctance in acknowledging their claim to domination. Had the English poet foreseen these wonderful happenings when he said :—

“ Forth rush the fiends as with the torrent’s sweep,
And deeds are done that make the angels weep.”

It is often said that East and West cannot understand one another. In past times this inability was mainly due to mutual ignorance, but in our own day the failure of the West to understand the East must be

cribed to the misrepresentation practised by a class of interested persons. We shall call this class of individuals "political penmen." A political penman need not necessarily be a professional journalist ; he may be an amateur empire-maker—soldier or civilian, or a missionary, or a young and irresponsible traveller with plenty of money who has neither inclination nor capacity for any career demanding hard and patient study. They all have a morbid passion for gaining fame or fortune, and the mischievous results of their efforts to this end are chiefly responsible for those Western aggressions by which the Muslim East is so constantly harassed. Their pen is as fatal to the peace of the Oriental as the infernal machine of an anarchist to the innocent victim. In the press as well as in book-land these political penmen find a wide scope for the propagation of their pestilential views on the requirements of civilization abroad. It is not seldom that bloody conquests originate in suggestions made by this class of men, who can see nothing in the Muslim East but ignorance, fanaticism, savagery, and anarchy. No wonder that public opinion in Christendom can never view the case of the Islamic world with equanimity when Eastern politics are influenced by such men as these.

No one apparently cares to ask why Abyssinia, which is no more civilized than Morocco in the European sense of the word, has the right to work out its own salvation unmolested, whilst the same privilege is denied to Morocco ; and why, again, at a time when the Egyptians so badly needed the tender care of a foreign Power, Bulgarians should be supported in their claim to an independent national existence. To maintain that the Bulgarians or any other petty community in the Balkans are the better qualified to dispense with outside interference is preposterous humbug.

The history of the Eastern Question has some picturesque records of diplomacy which, however sound they may appear to the jingo mind, are thoroughly grotesque from an Oriental standpoint. You carve out province after province from the territory of one Islamic state, and through the concerted action of the civilized Powers you create a free and independent state for the small Christian communities of those detached provinces to be ruled by some crown-seeking European prince, and this to the detriment of their Muslim population. On the other hand, you arrange understandings between

this and that Great Power of Europe for further division of the territories of this and that Muslim state, and then you claim to have conferred on these lands the blessings of civilization. Surely such unrestrained acts of civilized tomfoolery are bound to awaken the energy of despair in the much aggrieved Oriental. This despair may produce unforeseen eventualities, when even the quick-firers of the armies or the big-pounders of the navies, upon which the glory of European civilization in the Orient so much depends, may be ineffectual in securing a lasting pacification. The fiction of the Oriental "peril" may then materialize into something like a veritable danger which, in the interests of humanity at large, it is desirable to avoid.

The world of Islam is now beginning to regard with nervous anxiety this peril which Western jingoism is hard at work to create. Islam is more a social organism than a creed, and it inspires its adherents with the solid community of sentiment characteristic of a people with concrete national aspirations. Up till now its whole body has

uniformly suffered from Western encroachments, and henceforth, moved by a common sentiment, it will seek means of self-defence. Mussulmans must not allow themselves to be reduced to the same situation as that in which the entire Jewish people were placed centuries ago.

With universally admitted ingenuity the Jew saved himself from the oppression of the Christian. The methods followed by the Jew in safeguarding the existence of his community against the hardship of Christian domination would assuredly not find favour with the Mussulman. The Jew had to cast in his lot with Christians, had often to assume a Christian name and was forced in most places to conceal his origin and faith ; in short, he had to appear in Christian form. The fact that Judaism supplied the essence of the Christian faith did not save the Jew from Christian oppression. Therefore with his characteristic astuteness he tried more keenly than ever to possess himself of an Almighty object of adoration to which Christendom, more than any other part of the world, was showing an increasing devotion, namely money. Further, the Jew had discovered yet other methods of securing for his people more considerate treatment.

He captured an influential portion of the press through which he could largely control public opinion.

The people of Islam would perhaps find means of self-defence quite different from those adopted by the Jewish people. They form a far too large portion of mankind to be scattered. They will not always be easily dispersed by "superior moral pressure" wherever the interests of Christendom clash with those of Islam, as some persons in Europe imagine. Isolated members of the society of Islam may be scattered, not of course by the "superior moral influence," but by the sword of civilized Christendom, as has hitherto been the case. Yet the main body will not be destroyed. Who can say with certainty that Muslim nations will not be able to find in the future powerful supporters even in the heart of Europe? There are states which pursue not the policy of for ever making territorial conquests in the Muslim East but the legitimate conquest of the Eastern markets, and a tentative movement of boycott, started throughout the world of Islam against the manufactures of those countries which would allow no Muslim

race to enjoy the right of independence, might make such a support from Europe assured. Besides, Mussulmans will know in future how to recuperate, and as a body will cast in their lot with the rest of the Orient. Considerations of mutual sympathy between the Muslim and non-Muslim Orient necessitate such a development in the Oriental situation. The rights and liberties of the majority of the other Eastern peoples are no less at the mercy of conquering Christendom than the rights and liberties of the people of the Muslim East. Had Japan sustained defeat in the recent struggle, she could no more have claimed from Christendom recognition of her rights as an independent state and of her national dignity than is the case with China, Turkey or Persia.

"There is room for us all in Asia!"

This has long been the watchword of Western Jingoism, and it used to be addressed chiefly to Russia when that Power was still regarded as the chief pioneer of civilization in Asia. If the united efforts of the Asiatic races bring about in the Oriental situation the kind of development above referred to, they will quite naturally have a

watchword of their own. We make bold to surmise what this watchword will be; it will proclaim:

"There is room for all desirable strangers in this hospitable continent of Asia, but empire-making by outsiders is henceforth forbidden!"

